FOREIGN
BROADCAST
INFORMATION
SERVICE

Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

ATTENTION!! **ATTENTION!!** **ATTENTION!!**

FBIS will phase out publication of most of its paper reports, including ALL Daily Reports and most FBIS Reports, by 31 December 1996.

See inside for information on how to access FBIS products and services electronically.

FBIS-NES-96-047
Friday
8 March 1996

March 1996

Dear Customer:

Responding to our many customers' requests, NTIS will be offering FBIS publications electronically. Due to resource limitations, hardcopy production of FBIS publications will be phased out during 1996. We will notify our customers well in advance of the expiration date for each of our publications. Please see below regarding electronic access to products.

Our goal is to cease publication of all reports by 31 December 1996, except for S&T PERSPECTIVES, S&T CENTRAL EURASIA, S&T CHINA, S&T KOREA, S&T EUROPE, and S&T JAPAN. The S&T reports will continue to be published as hardcopy until the graphics they contain can be disseminated on-line.

FBIS products are offered electronically through the National Technical Information Service's (NTIS) "World News Connection" (WNC). This is a new on-line subscription service accessible through the World Wide Web. The Web address is http://wnc.fedworld.gov. Please see next page for a subscription form or call NTIS Fax Direct at 703-487-4140 and enter product code 8645 to receive more information.

World News Connection™

A Foreign News Alert Service
from
the U.S. Government

World News Connection - WNC1..**$ 21**
7 Day - Introductory Offer
Unlimited interactive searching
[no profiles]
Order number SUB-9856BDQ

World News Connection - WNC2..**$ 50**
Monthly
Unlimited interactive searching
[no profiles]
Order number PB95-985700BDQ

World News Connection - WNC3..**$ 75**
Monthly
Unlimited interactive searching
[1 profile]
Order number PB95-985800BDQ

World News Connection - WNC4..**$100**
Monthly
Unlimited interactive searching
[up to 5 profiles]
Order number PB95-985900BDQ
(Prices are subject to change)

User Name *(Please Print or Type)*	**Internet E-mail Address** *(Required)*	**Order Number**	**Price**
1) ____________	____________	____________	____________
2) ____________	____________	____________	____________

(Continue on a blank sheet if more space is required)

Deposit Account Number (for NTIS account customers only): ____________

Customer Master Number (if known): ____________ Date: ____________

Contact Name: ____________ Organization: ____________

Street Address: ____________ City: ____________ State: ____________ Zip: ____________

Province/Territory: ____________ Country: ____________

Foreign Postal Code: ____________

Internet E-mail Address (Organization contact person): ____________

Telephone Number: (   ) ____________ Fax Number: (   ) ____________

Credit Card Number: ____________

Credit Card Expiration Date: ____________

Card Type (Visa, Master Card, or American Express): ____________

Cardholder's Name (as printed on the credit card): ____________

Cardholder's Signature (required to validate all orders): ____________

(Please fax this form back to NTIS at **703-321-8547**. Fax service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
To verify receipt of your fax, call (703) 487-4679 between 7:00am - 5:00pm, Monday - Friday, Eastern Time.)

Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-047 CONTENTS *8 March 1996*

NOTICE: An * indicates material that may not be disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Speech at First Legislative Council *[Gaza TV]* 1
Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says Knesset Bill on Orient House Violates Accord *[Jericho VOP]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Meets German, French Foreign Ministers *[Jericho VOP]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: Officials Criticize Continued Closure of al-Fawwar Camp *[Jericho VOP]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: Police Report 'Good Results' in Fighting Terrorism *[Jerusalem TV]* 6
Palestinian Affairs: Ambassador Reports 8 Palestinians 'Disappeared' in Turkey *[MENA]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: Minister Warns of 'Unprecedented Scenes of Violence' *[Rome IL MESSAGGERO 7 Mar]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat's Confidant—Iran Is Behind Bomb Attacks in Israel *[Paris LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR 7-13 Mar]* 7
Palestinian Affairs: Qaddumi on Peace Process, Palestinian Issues *[London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH Mar]* 8
Palestinian Affairs: Police Commander on Search for Hamas Activists *[Jericho VOP]* 13
Palestinian Affairs: Al-Zahhar on Legislative Council, Hamas Stand *[Jericho VOP]* 13
Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Aide Denies Split, Arms Surrender Order *[London AL-HAYAH 8 Mar]* 14

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

Algeria: Makhloufi—OPEC Must Hold Extraordinary Meeting on Iraq *[Algiers Radio]* 16
Algeria: Zeroual Discusses 'Objectives' for 1996 *[Algiers TV]* 16
Algeria: Explosion Damages Pipeline Supplying Electric Power Plant *[Paris International]* ... 17

Egypt

Egypt: MENA Confirms World Summit on Terror Expected 13 Mar 17
Egypt: Mubarak, 'Arafat Discuss Peace Process on Telephone *[MENA]* 17
Egypt: Musa Returns From Gaza, Comments on Peace *[MENA]* 18
Egypt: Foreign Minister on Relations With Jordan, Regional Issues *[JORDAN TIMES 7 Mar]* 18
Egypt: U.S. Aid Said 'Wasted,' of No Benefit to People *[AL-WAFD 3 Mar]* 20

Libya

Libya: Group Claims Attempt To Slay al-Qadhdhafi *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 7 Mar]* 20

Libya: Involvement in Israel Bomb Attacks Denied *[Paris International]* 20

Morocco

Morocco: Filali, Iraq's Ramadan Discusses Bilateral Cooperation *[Rabat TV]* 21

Sudan

Sudan: Iraqi Republican Troops Reportedly Sighted in South *[Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI 8 Dec]* 21

Tunisia

Tunisia: Opposition Leader Ends Hunger Strike; Health Deteriorating *[Paris International]* 23

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Bahrain

Bahrain: Heir Apparent Addresses Press in London *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 7 Mar]* 24
Bahrain: Opposition—Detention of Women Shows Regime's 'Barbarity' *[Tehran International]* 25

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Symposium Concludes on GCC Economies *[SPA]* 25

Yemen

Yemen: Salih Receives Iraqi Envoy, Message From Saddam *[Sanaa Radio]* 26

IRAQ

Iraq: Source Claims Spare Parts for Agriculture Ministry Helicopters *[Baghdad TV]* 27
Iraq: KDP Denies Barzani, 'Any of Party's Leaders' Met Minister *[AL-HAYAH 7 Mar]* 27
Iraq: Kurdish Areas Bombarded; Material Damage Reported *[Voice of the People]* 27
Iraq: Oppositionist Criticizes King Husayn's Meeting With Kurds *[AL-AHRAM 3 Mar]* 27
Iraq: Opposition Claims Assassination of MKO Member in Baghdad *[IRNA]* 28
Iraq: Iran Said Planning To Help 'Reactivate' Opposition *[London AL-HAYAH 7 Mar]* 28
Iraq: Saddam Reportedly Considered Resigning *[Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI 22 Dec]* 28

ISRAEL

Israel: Savir—Peres Not Posing Conditions for Resuming Syria Talks *[Jerusalem TV]* 31
Israel: International Antiterror Summit To Convene in Taba 13 Mar *[Jerusalem Radio]* 31
Israel: Beilin on Antiterror Conference, PA Steps Against Terrorism *[Jerusalem Radio]* 31
Israel: Peres Urges Kinkel To Take 'Firm' Steps Against Iran *[Jerusalem Radio]* 32
Israel: Kinkel in Israel To Express Solidarity on Terrorist Attacks *[Berlin ARD/ZDF]* 32
Israel: CIA Deputy Director To Visit on Counterterror Cooperation *[HA'ARETZ 8 Mar]* 32
Israel: U.S. Antiterror Equipment Dubbed 'Public Relations Stunt' *[HATZOFE 7 Mar]* 33
Israel: Peres Says Iran More Dangerous Than Nazism *[Paris TV]* 33
Israel: Baraq—'Arafat Has 'Last Chance' To Dismantle Terror Groups *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 35
Israel: EU Changes Policy, To 'Stay Clear' of Orient House *[Jerusalem Radio]* 36
Israel: Shahal on War Against Terrorism, Arrest of Israeli Arab *[Jerusalem Radio]* 36
Israel: Court Reveals Name of Israeli Arab Driver of Hamas Bomber *[Jerusalem Radio]* 36
Israel: Duvdevan Unit Captures 5 Fugitives Linked to Suicide Attacks *[Jerusalem Radio]* 37
Israel: Shahal—PA Given Identity of Attack Planner; Arrest Awaited *[Jerusalem Radio]* 37

Israel: Police Close Hamas Jerusalem Office, Confiscate Equipment *[Jerusalem Radio]* 37
Israel: Navy Fears Hamas Fugitives May Flee to Egypt by Sea *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 37
Israel: Gallup Poll Says Peres Leads Premiership Race by 6 Points *[MA'ARIV 8 Mar]* 37
Israel: Post-Terror Poll Puts Netanyahu in Lead for Premiership *[YEDI'OT AHARONOT 8 Mar]* 38
Israel: Netanyahu Welcomes Clinton Visit, Regrets Peres' Remarks *[Jerusalem TV]* 39
Israel: Liba'i Confirms Islamic Decision To Thwart Peres Reelection *[Jerusalem TV]* 39
Israel: Rabin's Killer Court Testimony Detailed *[THE JERUSALEM POST 8 Mar]* 40

JORDAN

Jordan: Government 'Likely' To Seek IAF Help To Stop Hamas Activity *[THE STAR 13 Mar]* 41
Jordan: 'Great Hopes' for King Husayn Meeting With Clinton *[JORDAN TIMES 7 Mar]* 41
Jordan: King's Talks With Clinton in Washington Reported *[Amman Radio]* 42
Jordan: King Meets With U.S. Secretary of State Christopher *[Amman Radio]* 42
Jordan: Crown Prince Stresses Need for Continued Peace Efforts *[THE TIMES 8 Mar]* 42
Jordan: Khulayfat—Passport, Citizenship Issues To Be Resolved Soon *[JORDAN TIMES 7 Mar]* ... 43
Jordan: Human Rights Reports Note 'Sharp Increase' in Violations *[AOHR in Jordan Annual Report]* 44

LEBANON

Lebanon: All 'Services' Alerted for Fear of Israeli Attack *[Beirut Radio]* 51
Lebanon: Army Said on 'High Alert' To Prevent Hamas Deportations *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 51
Lebanon: Islamic Jihad Claims Responsibility for Tel Aviv Bombing *[VOL]* 51
Lebanon: Dallul—U.S. State Department Report 'Incites' Citizens *[Beirut Radio]* 51
Lebanon: Ministers React to U.S. State Department Report on Lebanon *[Beirut Radio]* 51
Lebanon: Hizballah's Qasim Calls For Continued Jihad Operations *[Tehran Radio]* 52
Lebanon: Buwayz Denies Receiving Invitation to Anti-Terror Summit *[Beirut Radio]* 52
Lebanon: Concern Voiced Over Israeli Reprisal Hint *[AL-HAYAH 7 Mar]* 52

SYRIA

Syria: Algerian Mediation Effort With Iraq Confirmed *[London AL-HAYAH 7 Mar]* 54
Syria: Al-Shar' Confers With PLO's Qaddumi *[Damascus Radio]* 54

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Council Aware of Hezb-e Eslami Talks With Government *[Message of Freedom]* 55
Afghanistan: Opposition Group Signs Military Accord With Government *[Tehran International]* 55
Afghanistan: Rabbani Praises Iran's Efforts To Restore Peace *[IRNA]* 55

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Opposition Leader Flees Rally Following Bombs, Gunfire *[AFP]* 55
Bangladesh: BNP Official Comments on Political Crisis, Opposition *[Dhaka Radio]* 56
Bangladesh: Aid Donors Express 'Grave Concern' Over Political Crisis *[Dhaka Radio]* 56

India

India: Kashmiri Leader Shabbir Shah Arrested *[Delhi Radio]* 56
India: Two Top Militants Among 23 Arrested in Kashmir, Delhi *[Delhi Radio]* 56
India: Delhi Said To Get Russian Antimissile Missiles 'Soon' *[FINANCIAL EXPRESS 2 Mar]* 56
India: Parliament Proceedings Disrupted Over Bribery Issue *[Delhi Radio]* 57
India: Rao Views Probe Into Illegal Money Transfer Case *[Delhi Radio]* 57

India: Threat of 'Massive' Power Shortages Viewed *[Delhi TV]* 58
India: Commentary Reviews Economic, Trade Ties With EU *[Delhi Radio]* 58

Iran

Iran: Majles Election Voting Begins; President Casts Vote *[IRNA]* 59
Iran: Rafsanjani Urges 'Popular' Majles Relying on 'Free Vote' *[Tehran TV]* 59
Iran: Khamene'i Urges 'No Irregularity' in Election *[Tehran TV]* 60
Iran: Voting Process Going 'Smoothly' *[IRNA]* 60
Iran: Emami-Kashani Urges Vigilance Against Election Irregularity *[Tehran Radio]* 61
Iran: Majles Member Criticizes BBC Treatment of Elections *[IRNA]* 61
Iran: Rejected Candidates Gather in Front of Guardians' HQ *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 3 Mar]* 62
Iran: Rejection of Eligibility of Leftist Candidates Noted *[TEHRAN TIMES 4 Mar]* 62
Iran: Majles Candidates Express Political Views *[IRNA]* 63
Iran: Tehran Mayor—All Parties Should Be Represented in Majles *[TEHRAN TIMES 29 Feb]* 64
Iran: Besharati on 'People's Massive Participation' in Elections *[IRNA]* 64
Iran: Morteza Alviri Analyzes Upcoming Elections *[ABRAR 28 Dec]* 64
Iran: Paper Surveys Foreign 'Propaganda' on Election *[SALAM 3 Mar]* 66
Iran: Paper on Khamene'i Office Member at Scrutiny Meeting *[SALAM 5 Mar]* 67
Iran: Former Minister on Islamic Revolution Mojahedin's Views *[TEHRAN TIMES 29 Feb]* .. 67
Iran: Commentary on Qualities Needed for Fifth Majles Deputies *[RESALAT 3 Mar]* 68
Iran: 'Wrong Policy' Places Israelis in 'Trap' *[Tehran International]* 68
Iran: Zarif Faults West's 'Selective' Approach to Terrorism Issue *[IRNA]* 69
Iran: Daily Scores Turkish Government's Stand on Iran *[RESALAT 18 Feb]* 69
Iran: Tehran Views DYP-ANAP Coalition in Turkey *[Tehran International]* 70
Iran: Daily Says Afghanistan Needs 'New Vision' *[IRNA]* 70
Iran: Bosnian Premier Praises Tehran's 'Vital' Aid During War *[IRNA]* 71
Iran: Bosnian Prime Minister Welcomed by First Vice-President *[IRNA]* 71
Iran: Rafsanjani Meets Bosnia's Muratovic, Promises Aid *[Tehran TV]* 72
Iran: Habibi Meets With Bosnia's Muratovic, To Visit Sarajevo *[IRNA]* 72
Iran: Habibi Hold More Talks With Visiting Bosnian Prime Minister *[IRNA]* 72
Iran: Ambassador Denies Presence of Bosnian Forces in Iran *[TEHRAN TIMES 5 Mar]* 73
Iran: Bosnian Prime Minister on Western Failures *[IRNA]* 73
Iran: Daily Says Bosnian Peace Process Precarious *[IRNA]* 74
Iran: Reports on Iran's Military Involvement in Bosnia Scored *[TEHRAN TIMES 5 Mar]* 74
Iran: Justice Minister Meets With Russian Counterpart *[Tehran Radio]* 75
Iran: Government, Russia To Sign Agreement on Legal Cooperation *[IRNA]* 75
Iran: Russian Justice Minister Confers With Chief Justice *[IRNA]* 75
Iran: Rowhani Meets With Justice Minister; Denounces U.S. *[IRNA]* 76
Iran: Russian Justice Minister, Prosecutor Review Legal Issues *[IRNA]* 76
Iran: Rafsanjani Receives Russian Interior Minister Kovalev *[IRNA]* 76
Iran: Russian Justice Minister Signs Agreement, Departs *[IRNA]* 77
Iran: Commentary Discusses Cooperation With Russia *[Tehran Radio]* 77
Iran: President Receives Envoys From Niger, Sudan *[Tehran TV]* 77
Iran: PRC Envoy Holds Talks With IRNA Chief on News Exchange *[IRNA]* 78
Iran: Kazakh Official Calls For Expanded Trade, Political Ties *[IRNA]* 78
Iran: Borujerdi Holds Talks With Sri Lankan Agriculture Minister *[IRNA]* 78
Iran: Paper Comments on Velayati Visit to Moscow *[IRNA]* 79
Iran: Troops Start 'Zafar' Maneuver *[IRNA]* 79
Iran: 2,050 Rifles Seized, 912 People Rounded Up in Southwest *[IRNA]* 79
Iran: Mohtashemi Cited on Liberation Movement of Iran *[TEHRAN TIMES 2 Mar]* 79

Pakistan

Pakistan: Spokesman on Border Fence Dispute With India, Kashmir *[Islamabad Radio]* 80

Pakistan: Spokesman Notes Indian Attacks on Kashmiri Leaders *[Islamabad TV]* 81
Pakistan: TV Reports Top Kashmiri Leader's Telephone Interview *[Islamabad TV]* 81
Pakistan: Leghari Stresses Desire for Peace, Views Threat From India *[Islamabad TV]* 82
Pakistan: Afghan Leaders Meeting in Islamabad Viewed *[TAKBEER 29 Feb]* 82
Pakistan: Spokesman Dismisses Kabul Objections to Road Work *[Islamabad Radio]* 83

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: President Rules Out Early Elections *[DAILY NEWS 7 Mar]* 84
Sri Lanka: Over 50 Dissidents Imprisoned by LTTE Reportedly Escape *[DAILY NEWS 7 Mar]* 84
Sri Lanka: Navy Destroys LTTE 'Flotilla' *[DAILY NEWS 8 Mar]* 84
Sri Lanka: 'Biggest Ever' Arms Haul Made in Colombo *[Colombo International]* 85
Sri Lanka: LTTE Reports Killing of Civilians by Colombo Troops *[Tamil Eelan News WWW]* 85
Sri Lanka: LTTE Dispatch Reports Air Force Raids, LTTE Offensive *[Tamil Eelam News WWW]* 86

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Speech at First Legislative Council

JN0703130596 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1035 GMT 7 Mar 96

[Speech by Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat at the inauguration of the first Palestinian Legislative Council in Gaza — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. And those who, when an oppressive wrong is inflicted on them, are not cowed but help and defend themselves. [Koranic verse]

Brother speaker of the National Council, brother speaker of the Legislative Council, brothers in the Speakership of the Legislative Council, heads and members of delegations and representatives of sisterly and friendly states, sister and brother members of the Legislative Council, esteemed guests and brothers: First of all, I would like to welcome the honorable guests, representatives of parliaments and sisterly and friendly states in the name of the Palestinian people, the Palestinian National Authority [PNA], and the PLO Executive Committee. I would also like to greet and thank them for their kind participation which denotes their support for future Palestine and for the just and comprehensive peace in our region. Much of the credit for what we achieved goes to some of the brothers who are here representing their countries and leaders. In this regard, we must say that the first and second Oslo agreements were signed in Washington under the supervision and sponsorship of President Clinton and the Russian cosponsor and this Arab and international gathering, including the EU, the Security Council permanent member states, Japan, the Nonaligned states, the African and Islamic states, and my Arab brothers. This was followed by talks and the Cairo agreement under the sponsorship of my brother President Husni Mubarak with the participation of the two sponsors of the conference. Later Taba talks were held in Egypt. Here we must gratefully mention the donor states and the aid they offered and are offering as well as the World Bank, the IMF, the UN institutions, and UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali.

Brothers, your advent to our homeland at these difficult moments to share with us this historic occasion means a great deal to our people. We offer you our great appreciation. I would like to extend to the speaker of the Legislative Council, his deputies, and the secretary my congratulations on the members' confidence in them. I wish them every success in their tasks. I would also like to congratulate every member of the council for the confidence placed in you by your people. I extend a special congratulation to the sister members of the council and tell them: Your winning the council membership.... ['Arafat changes thought, saying that he will use the masculine rather than the feminine form of the verb for women because he sees no difference between men and women in Palestinian society, and because the Palestinian constitution says men and women] Your winning of the council membership is a certificate of appreciation by our people for the distinguished role played by the Palestinian woman in all stages of our national struggle. It indicates the importance of continuing and developing this role in the future in order to build our homeland and independent state.

We hold this historic session of our Legislative Council amid extremely difficult circumstances because of the sanguinary events which occurred in our region over the past few days. We insisted on holding this session on schedule despite the closure imposed on the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and all the Palestinian towns, villages, and refugee camps. This is out of our desire to send a message to the world, the whole world, a message as clear as the sun, with all its import and with our people's determination to build their future and state regardless of all difficulties and obstacles.

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. So lose not heart, nor fall into despair; for ye must gain mastery if ye are true in faith. [Koranic verses]

The message says: The march of peace, the peace of the brave, which began with the Declaration of Principles signed between the PLO and the State of Israel, will continue, will continue, will continue [applause], and we will never allow anyone, whoever he may be, from the enemies of peace, inside or outside, in both directions and on both sides, to hinder this march or deviate it from the correct path that leads to completing all of its phases and aims. We will never allow violence or terrorism to stop this peaceful march. Glory be to God in the heavens, peace be on earth, and goodwill among men [applause]. The message says: The march of building the independent Palestinian national entity will last and will continue its progress during the new resurrection on the land of Palestine and its heart, holy Jerusalem. The message says: The march of development, modernization, and the building of the free national economy must continue with renewed momentum and determination, and a modern, correct performance as we move on toward building the new state and society.

The message says: The march of democracy which was inaugurated by the presidential and legislative elections on 20 January, will continue and nobody from the enemies of democracy and progress will be able to stop this march. Our people will not allow anybody to challenge their free, independent will. Yes, our people will not allow anybody to challenge their free, independent will.

Sisters and brothers, we are certain that the forces of darkness, apostasy, and terrorism, have done whatever they could to strike at this historic achievement, which is linked to the deepest axioms of peace. Those who planned and implemented the recent crimes in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv, killing dozens of innocent civilians—Israeli, Palestinian, and foreign—and before that the assassination of our partner in the peace process, Mr. Yitzhaq Rabin, were in fact not directing their blows only at the Israelis but at the Palestinians as well; yes to the Palestinians as well. They wanted to direct a fatal blow to the peace process and its sublime aims, to kill the newborn Palestinian dream which we are working to see brought up, strong and complete to realize independence on our soil and to establish a democratic society to meet the aspirations of our generations.

From this rostrum, I address my message to our Palestinian people and to our partners in the peace process, the Israeli people and government, to all the peoples and states of our region, to the cosponsors of the peace process, to the EU and UN Security Council, to all the friendly and sisterly countries, and to the whole world, calling on everybody to confront this violence and terror and coordinate efforts to uproot violence and its causes on both sides, so as to provide for our countries security and stability, and to provide the future of our region the cherished brightness.

From this rostrum, I propose to all the international and regional sides that are concerned with just peace in the region to hold a highest level meeting to discuss the means of protecting the peace process and to speed it up on all tracks, considering this a basic and important step to block the cycle of bloody violence and to search for ways of confronting terrorism as a regional and international phenomenon, something which was expressed and reiterated by President Clinton.

While we, as a Palestinian National Authority and as a people with deep roots, will not waver from our principled and systematic battle against terrorism, we believe that this major international problem cannot be solved through occupation, settlement activity, siege, closure, restrictions, exceptional measures, or the collective punishment of the entire Palestinian people. It can be solved through an enlightened treatment of its motives and the climate in which it is born and in which it spreads. Preserving human rights, spreading justice, bringing up the youths in healthy conditions and according to modern culture, while adhering to the highest true values and convictions, will curb the phenomenon of terrorism and its consequences in our region, where we are making peace—the peace of the brave—and are facing its challenges, especially those relations, which have become known to all, between the extremist forces on both sides, on both sides, on both sides [repeated twice, as heard]. I say on both sides, yes, on both sides, and I can prove it.

We do not see a solution to the phenomenon of terrorism in the present penalties and closures against our entire people and our areas. These violations pose a threat to the invaluable accomplishments we have obtained from the peace process and place them in the circle of danger. Despite the Israeli society's pain and sorrow, which we share with them, I would like to stress that these tragic moments should not darken the picture in front of us. Yes, not in front of us, the Palestinians; in front of us, the Israelis; or in front of us, the Arabs. Peace has achieved great gains. We covered several steps on the path of building a new Middle East dominated by openness. We are all aware of the fact that peace has a price and that there are forces that will try to drown it in blood to keep it from becoming comprehensive or firmly entrenched. I have said this publicly. It is our duty today to defend peace against terrorism and to move forward.

Let everyone know that violence and terrorism are against all religious, spiritual, human, national, and pan-Arab values. Indeed, violence and terrorism are against all religious, spiritual, human, national, and pan-Arab values. Terrorism conflicts with divine and human laws. In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate: And fear tumult or oppression, which affecteth not in particular only those of you who do wrong. [Koranic verse]

Dear guests, brothers, ladies, and gentlemen: The presidential and legislative elections held a few weeks ago ushered in a new era for the Palestinian people. A great number of Palestinians went to the polls to elect the president of the Palestinian National Authority and the members of the Legislative Council. At the same time, these people cast their votes for the sake of the future of Palestine. The Palestinian people's broad and organized participation confirmed their absolute support for the peace option. This option was adopted by the Palestine National Council in 1988, when it agreed to a solution that includes a Palestinian and an Israeli state.

In 1991, we took part in the Madrid peace conference, which culminated in the Oslo Declaration of Principles agreement, which we signed in Washington and Cairo. In addition, the Palestinian people voted in support of the establishment of the first Palestinian authority on the land of Palestine. I remind you that in 1974, the Palestine National Council adopted the decision to establish a Palestinian national authority on any part of land from which the Israelis withdrew. This is in accordance with the decision of the Palestine National Council in 1974 in Cairo and in support of the democratic option based on free and direct elections.

The world watched the elections closely. No doubt, the image reflected by our people was bright and expressed maturity, civilized conduct, and great awareness. We take pride in this image. Our people have a great cultural heritage in this blessed and ancient land. It is a blessed and ancient land. But We delivered him and his nephew Lut and directed them to the land which We have blessed for the nations. [Koranic verse] Our people are able, despite all ordeals, to confirm their contributions and sacrifices. Our people are also able to set a good example in the land of peace, Palestine, the first qiblah and third holiest mosque, the land from which Prophet Muhammad, God's peace and prayer on him, ascended to heaven, and the cradle of Christ, peace be upon him.

These elections have opened the first phase of constitutional and legal legitimacy in the history of the Palestinian people, launching an independent Palestinian national entity in order to establish an independent Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital. As we proceed with this new era, we recall with appreciation and pride all the heroic martyrs of our people, foremost of whom is my dear brother Abu-Jihad [Khalil al-Wazir], the master of martyrs [applause]. The souls of those who have fallen on the path of struggle for the sake of Palestine's freedom and independence over the past decades are now resting peacefully in heaven along with the prophets, the righteous ones, and the martyrs, the best companions of all.

The goals for which these martyrs have sacrificed their lives are now being epitomized on our land. We also recall with appreciation and pride our wounded and our male and female prisoners who are still behind the bars, foremost of whom is His Eminence Shaykh Ahmad Yasin. These heroes, who have contributed to the achievements of our people, are saluted by our people for their heroism. The freedom for which they have struggled is imminent, God willing. [applause] They have a date with the morning, is the morning not imminent?

Sisters and brothers: Your people's confidence in you is accompanied by great aspirations, expectations, and responsibilities. But I believe that this council, along with the Palestine National Council, is able to shoulder these responsibilities, because its members have a great deal of experience. This council incorporates many generations and experiences that cover all the phases of the Palestinian struggle in all arenas, including the homeland and the diaspora. These generations include the generation that lived with the setback at the beginning and after national action; the generation that lived in the diaspora and launched the revolution; and the generation that suffered a great deal under the occupation until it launched the brave, blessed intifadah.

The combination of these experiences and experiments is sure to fulfill the tasks of the forthcoming stage. Allow me to present what I believe to be the major points of our national agenda for the upcoming stage.

The first task is protecting and promoting peace. Peace — the peace of the brave, which required great courage on the part of the sides involved — has become an established fact on the ground. However, this should not cause us to ignore or underestimate the dangers that threaten peace — dangers posed by the extremist groups on both sides, which are antipeace and seek to eliminate this peace. Let us remember the statements of the leader of the radical Israeli movement EYAL after my partner in the peace process, Mr. Rabin, was killed. In these statements, the leader of EYAL, Avishay Raviv Movement, revealed meetings and coordination with the radical Palestinian groups to undermine the peace process. I am not fabricating this or making false allegations about any party. These are his statements, published in the Hebrew newspaper YERUSHALAYIM, in which he confessed that meetings that were held between them. Some of these meetings were held near my headquarters — there is only a kilometer between the scene of these meetings, near the Palestine Hotel on the Gaza sea, and my headquarters. I am not fabricating anything.

My brother guests, representatives of the friendly and sisterly countries, and members of the Legislative Council, I have many documents to reveal to the other party. Nothing was carried out by one party. But their efforts are in vain, because this is our will, the combined will of the Palestinian and Israeli people, as well as the people of the region to entrench a just and comprehensive peace for the sake of a new Middle East.

Protecting and promoting peace is not a mere verbal shell and not just a single measure. It is a comprehensive, permanent, and continuous policy that should be adopted by all regional and international sides involved in making peace. As we assert our commitment to and respect for the peace agreements and our pledges therein, we reiterate that we will not allow any force on our territory to try to undermine the peace process. Any such attempt is tantamount to direct aggression against the higher national interests of the Palestinian people. These attempts are being confronted with absolute firmness and strength, without any hesitation or negligence. We will not be lax about protecting and shouldering the responsibility that was entrusted to us by our people to safeguard their rights, their interests, their future, the future of generations to come, and this peace under the new world order.

We are looking forward to the Israeli side taking the required measures to confront the fascist and racist forces that still dream of domination, expansion, occupation, and transfer. These forces have publicly declared their determination to destroy peace. We stress that these measures are also required of all states and people of the region and the entire peace-loving world. These measures are required of us more than anyone else. As you know and as we have already declared, we have confronted these forces firmly and stringently.

To safeguard and enhance peace, there must be a faithful and meticulous commitment to the implementation of the agreements between the PLO and the Israeli Government. There must be a commitment to the timetable set for the phases of the peace process and a spirit of participation in implementing these phases. We must avoid any act that might cause tension or spread an atmosphere of distrust. All this will provide the most important and effective contribution to safeguarding the peace of the brave.

We, the Palestinians and Israelis, should move forward in implementing the agreements we have signed. Two months from now, we should be ready to begin the final-status negotiations, including the completion of the redeployment from Hebron, and we should be able to call for a Palestine National Council session to discuss and amend the charter. The credibility of the peace process will be severely harmed if it encounters any delays or procrastination in the implementation of any article of the agreements, irrespective of the difficulties and challenges. Meticulous and faithful implementation are necessary for beginning the final-status discussions in the atmosphere of trust is required for progress and success.

For peace to be bolstered and to turn into a lofty edifice and a deep-rooted historic fact, the final phase must ensure the implementation of the resolutions of the international legitimacy, represented by UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all territories occupied in 1967, starting with by holy Jerusalem, in accordance with the international resolutions that constituted the basis of the Madrid peace conference. This must lead to the resolution of the issues of the Palestinian refugees, the final borders, the settlers, and the settlements.

This is the framework that will safeguard peace in the region, ensure its continuation, and open the necessary horizons for arriving at a just, comprehensive solution in the region, a solution that achieves peace on all the Arab-Israeli tracks, including the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, and leads the Palestinian track to independence. Consequently, our primary mission at this stage is to reassert our permanent commitment to the peace agreements in a manner that ensures the realization of our people's legitimate rights and the achievement of full national independence. Yes, brothers, our full national independence.

The next task is bolstering national unity. Truly, God loves those who fight in His cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure. [Koranic verse] Be united my sons should I face any tribulations. When arrows are not one bundle, they will break one after another. [quote from a poem]

Yes, in every stage of our long march, we were careful to protect and safeguard our national unity. The historic elections a few weeks ago embodied the people's unity and solidarity. This new stage heralds the beginning of a new Palestinian political system. This system fixes our people on the geopolitical map of the region. Yes, my brothers, this system fixes our people on the geopolitical map of the region. This system will have significant and crucial repercussions not only in Palestine, but in the entire region. This system is based on constitutional legitimacy. We reaffirm our eagerness to enhance national unity, solidarity, and cohesion between our people inside the homeland and in exile and the diaspora.

This is the central and major role of the PLO, which will engage in the final-status negotiations on behalf of the Palestinian people, wherever they are. It is important to activate and convene the PLO institutions, including the Palestine National Council, within the next two months.

From this place, from the heart of Palestine, on this historic occasion, and in your name, I salute all the sons of our people in the homeland and in exile. We pledge, along with them, to pursue the march to achieve all the national rights of our people in accordance with international legitimacy and the UN resolutions. I also appeal, from this podium, to all active forces, factions, and currents. I urge them to join the framework of national action.

The next stage requires us to mobilize our forces and energies to face all challenges and difficulties. The elements of unity between us are greater than the factors of division. The doors are open to all Palestinian national forces to work under the umbrella of the National Authority in a democratic manner and in accordance with political pluralism and the law. Let us agree on whatever we can and excuse each other on matters on which we differ.

The third task is the establishment of the Palestinian national entity. Sisters and brothers, we have a heavy working agenda in this respect. You should devote your efforts to completing the legal infrastructure needed to start our national entity. This council is called upon to formulate the laws, regulations, and legislation that will organize our course of action and daily life in our country. These laws will be the source of reference for the executive branch, which also bases its action on the PLO, and for the judicial branch.

This is a sacred and historic duty. Our people have reached a consensus that laws and regulations should be based on political pluralism, the protection of basic liberties, particularly freedom of speech, the separation of powers, equal opportunity, and equality between men and women. With the formulation of these laws and the completion of the frameworks and structures, we will have a solid basis for the establishment of a modern, democratic, and progressive entity that will allow Palestine to enter the next century, make cultural contributions within a pan-Arab framework, and regain the status it has enjoyed throughout history as a beacon that participates in the civilization of the region and the world.

The fourth task is expediting reconstruction and development. We have to carry out huge efforts on all fronts to pursue the process of rebuilding what was destroyed and damaged in our country during the many years of occupation. We must also rebuild our destroyed infrastructure and achieve development that will secure a good life for our people. We must also attract Palestinian, Arab, and international expertise and potential to achieve the economic development we are capable of attaining with God's help. Yes, we are capable of achieving it because we deserve it. We should be determined to achieve this and not just live by slogans. We deserve such development because we are capable of achieving it. [applause]

The international community should also continue to assist our programs and projects. This requires ending the multiform closures, which greatly harm our workers, people, children, and our entire economy.

In this and other fields, we primarily rely on our community and our Arab roots, and we stress our desire to enhance our pan-Arab relations and work on closer cooperation with the fraternal Arab countries. Our relationship with Egypt and President Mubarak is developing in all areas, God be praised. We are also reinforcing our relations with our twin brother, Jordan, and with my brother his majesty the king. We have close relations with the brothers in Saudi Arabia, and I beseech Almighty God in your name to grant good health to His Majesty King Fahd, custodian of the two holy mosques. We also maintain similar relations with Yemen, the Arabian Gulf, and the Arab Maghreb. By the Arabian Gulf, I mean Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. I say Kuwait, even though it has expelled our people. Kuwait, the Kuwaiti people, and the Kuwaiti leaders are our brothers and loved ones.

By the Arab Maghreb, I mean Tunisia, which hosts the PLO [applause], and I mean my brother and cousin his Majesty King Hassan II [applause], not only as leader of the Kingdom of Morocco, but also as the president of the Organization of Islamic Conference and chairman of the Jerusalem Committee [applause]. I remember my beloved brothers in Mauritania and its President Taya; my brothers in Algeria, who hosted Palestine National Council sessions; and my brother President Zeroual. I also remember our brothers in Libya and all the other Arab countries, including Sudan, Yemen, Oman, Iraq [applause], and Mauritania, without exception.

I express our certain desire to see a solution on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in order for us to work together to build a just and comprehensive peace on all fronts and throughout the region. I also call for lifting the siege imposed on the Iraqi and Libyan peoples [applause]. We are trying to build a new Middle East for us all.

Brothers and sisters, Palestinian Legislative Council members: As it shoulders its historic responsibilities and tasks, your council should be provided with a propitious atmosphere and given all possible support so that it can play its role and exercise its powers in full. All the authority's executive agencies will do everything necessary for the council to fulfill its expected role appropriately and effectively. We do not promise miracles. We do not make promises that we will not be able to honor. However, we promise you that we will do everything we can with honesty and faithfulness, depending on God the Almighty, first and foremost, and on the determination, will, and endurance of our people, who are greater than their past, present, and future leaderships.

Palestinian Legislative Council members, respected guests, brother attendees: We are all witnesses to the making of history for our people and region. We are all witnesses to the birth of a new democracy in the Middle East. We are all witnesses to the beginning of a new stage in the resurrection of Palestine — people, homeland, and independent entity — and witnesses to a new beginning in the march of the Palestinian people toward the creation of an independent state and its capital, holy Jerusalem.

Once again, I greet you and our dear guests. I wish you and your council success. In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate: And we wished to be gracious to those who were being depressed in the land, to make them leaders in faith and make them heirs, to establish a firm place for them in the land. [Koranic verse]

May God's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says Knesset Bill on Orient House Violates Accord

JN0803124296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1200 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat considers the Israeli Knesset's endorsement of the first reading of the draft bill on closing Orient House a violation of the agreement because Orient House is the main headquarters of the negotiating delegation.

In a statement to journalists after Friday prayers, President 'Arafat spoke about the idea of an international summit to combat terrorism and said there is a religious ruling that says Islam is against violence and terrorism.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Meets German, French Foreign Ministers

JN0803094296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat last night met with German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, who is visiting the region to express his country's support for continuing the peace process and for international efforts to combat terrorism.

After the meeting, 'Arafat reiterated his commitment to the peace process and voiced his regret that other countries are supporting terrorism.

The German minister said his country is concerned about the peace process and noted that the achievements realized in this process must not be affected by the recent attacks.

'Arafat also met with French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette. They discussed the latest developments in the region in light of the suicide operations and the continued Israeli closure. The French minister said after the meeting that his country supports any efforts to eliminate terrorism.

Palestinian Affairs: Officials Criticize Continued Closure of al-Fawwar Camp

JN0703183196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 7 Mar 96

[Report by Salim Abu-Salih in Hebron]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prominent Hebron Governorate figures condemned the continuation of the curfew against al-Fawwar Camp in Hebron for the fourth day in a row. They also condemned the banning of food supplies to the camp and the large-scale torture campaign carried out by the occupation troops against the Palestinian citizens in the camp.

Mahmud Talab al-Nammurah, mayor of Durah, who was banned by occupation troops yesterday from bringing food and milk for children into the camp, made the following statement:

[Begin al-Nammurah recording] To siege the camp for five days and impose a curfew is collective punishment against the camp's more than 6,000 residents. I, along with the municipal council's members, tried to enter the camp during the two-hour lifting of the curfew to give to the besieged citizens some bread and vegetables, but we were prevented from doing so. We contacted the military and civilian liaison offices, who said we could enter the camp. However, the military official insisted that the food was not allowed to reach the besieged citizens of the camp. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Police Report 'Good Results' in Fighting Terrorism

TA0703200596 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 7 Mar 96

[Interview with Brigadier General Ghazi al-Jabali, chief of the Palestinian Police, by Hasan Abu-Zayid in Gaza on 7 March—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Jabali] Following the recent bloody events in the friendly state of Israel, which is our neighbor; following these bloody and horrible events, which we reject, condemn, and consider a stain of shame on humanity and peace, we had to redouble our efforts to eliminate this evil scourge, the scourge of terrorism, which is trying to harm our country or the area close to us.

The security services, the police, and the national security forces have increased and intensified their activity, and so far, it has produced good results. I repeat: So far, good results. This was acknowledged yesterday by the Israeli prime minister. He said that the National Authority and the Israeli security forces — each in their own domain — have achieved good progress in combating terrorism. We are not doing this for Israel's sake. We are not Israeli soldiers and are not trying to appease Israel. We are doing this because it is a Palestinian interest above all and because we signed the peace agreement as a strategic and not a tactical goal. We are against any operation that seeks to wreck the peace agreement.

We have seized a considerable quantity of arms: more than 45 revolvers and about 50 different weapons — rifles, locally made machine guns, and so forth — totaling approximately 100 weapons, in addition to some explosive material.

[Abu-Zayid] What is the number of detainees?

[Al-Jabali] At present, approximately 500 detainees.

[Abu-Zayid] Have you arrested fugitives from among the names announced by Israel?

[Al-Jabali] Yes. We have arrested approximately seven of them.

Palestinian Affairs: Ambassador Reports 8 Palestinians 'Disappeared' in Turkey

NC0803114296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1105 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ankara, 8 Mar (MENA)—Palestinian Ambassador in Ankara Fu'ad Yasin has stated that eight Palestinians have disappeared in Turkey since the recent explosions in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

In a statement to the MENA correspondent in Ankara, Yasin said he has informed the Turkish authorities of their disappearance. He indicated that there is some evidence that there are political reasons for their disappearance. He added that some of those who disappeared have contacted their relatives by phone, but without giving any information on their whereabouts.

Yasin did not rule out that there are foreign groups behind this. He indicated that the Palestinian Embassy is closely following the issue with the Turkish authorities.

Palestinian Affairs: Minister Warns of 'Unprecedented Scenes of Violence'

BR0703140196 Rome IL MESSAGGERO in Italian 7 Mar 96 p 13

[Interview with Palestinian Minister Sa'ib 'Urayqat by Eric Salerno in Jerusalem; date not given: "The PLO's Chief Negotiator: Do Not Listen to Fanatics, Peres" — first paragraph is IL MESSAGGERO introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sa'ib 'Urayqat is a minister in the Palestinian "Government." He headed the PLO delegation to the Washington talks that preceded the Oslo agreement.

[Salerno] What will be the effect of the measures that the Israelis have taken against the Palestinian population?

['Urayqat] The peace process is slipping through our fingers. Sad to say, the extremists on both sides are succeeding in their intentions. In part they have already succeeded. Peres is shooting himself in the foot. The Israelis have tried collective punishments — demolitions, houses sealed up, night round-ups — for 28 years, but in vain. And, what is even worse, they are now doing these same things again unilaterally, as if the Oslo agreement no longer existed. It is a dangerous development. We have to preserve the peace process. In this way it will be destroyed.

[Salerno] What should Peres do?

['Urayqat] He must not use the Palestinians, all the Palestinians, those who want peace and are cooperating with Israel, as a bone to be thrown to the Israeli extremists. He must increase cooperation with us, he must go ahead with the peace process, and he must not allow himself to be held hostage to street protests and demonstrations. Many of the terrorists are from areas not under our control, and in many villages in the Hebron neighborhood where we have a partial presence, we have not yet managed to take the situation in hand. However, the greater our presence, the greater the possibility of preventing attacks. Peace and continued implementation of the settlements, step by step, are the only option.

[Salerno] What if it were not to go ahead?

['Urayqat] These terrorist campaigns are not the result of the peace process; they are campaigns launched by those who want to destroy the peace process. If what has been so laboriously built up to date were to collapse, what we have seen in these days of deep mourning would prove to be merely the tip of the iceberg. It would turn the clock of relations between our two peoples back over the years, and we would end up by witnessing unprecedented scenes of violence between Palestinians and Israelis.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat's Confidant—Iran Is Behind Bomb Attacks in Israel

BR0703153296 Paris LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR in French 7-13 Mar 96 p 50

[Interview with Ahmad al-Tibi, identified as 'Arafat's confidant, by Elisabeth Schemla; place and date not given: "Iran Is Behind it All" — first paragraph is LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmad al-Tibi, an Israeli Arab gynecologist and obstetrician in East Jerusalem, is one of the Palestinian president's confidants. He denounces terrorist violence.

[Schemla] What is your personal reaction to these attacks?

[Al-Tibi] I am ashamed, totally ashamed, of what has just happened. I am not proud either as a Palestinian or as an Arab. Furthermore, the Israeli Arabs immediately disowned the terrorism practiced by the armed branch of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement. They did so in the four largest towns in Galilee. After all, we know that we will be the first ones to pay the price of the violence perpetrated by religious extremists....

[Schemla] Who is seeking to stop the peace process?

[Al-Tibi] 'Arafat and the Palestinian Authority symbolize the new Middle East because they are seeking reconciliation with Israel. It is this new image of the region, with all that it implies, that the fundamentalists are seeking to destroy. But those who plant bombs are not, as is believed, commanded from Gaza or the West Bank. They are commanded by Iran. It is Iran which is financially and militarily behind all those who plant bombs. Iran's ambition is to destroy our Palestinian dream.

[Schemla] Precisely, does what is happening today not demonstrate that 'Arafat was wrong to opt to negotiate with the political branch of Hamas?

[Al-Tibi] No. 'Arafat made the right choice. The proof of this is that we succeeded in stopping the bombings for so long. It must be reiterated that it was the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash, Hamas' "Engineer," which triggered terrorism again. But Hamas' desire for vengeance does not explain everything. What is happening at the moment demonstrates that one part of the Palestinian community has decided to topple 'Arafat, just as on the Israeli side one part of the population wants to weaken Shim'on Peres and the Labor Party in order to bring Likud to power.

[Schemla] After Rabin's assassination, do you now fear for 'Arafat's life?

[Al-Tibi] 'Arafat's life has been under threat for 30 years. There is nothing new in this.

[Schemla] Is 'Arafat's fight against terrorism credible?

[Al-Tibi] Yes, precisely because the Palestinian Authority now wants to commit itself totally to preventing any terrorist attacks. But in a fit of rage the Israelis have made decisions on maintaining order that are not only ineffective, but also counterproductive. What I mean is that closing off the territories as a form of collective punishment can only inflame people and benefit the enemies of peace. The stronger the presence of the Israeli Army in the villages and refugee camps, the richer the breeding ground for encouraging the planters of suicide bombs will be.

[Schemla] Will 'Arafat delete the 11 articles contained in the PLO Charter that call for Israel's destruction?

[Al-Tibi] Not only will the Palestinian Authority do so, but it will do so before the Israeli elections. However, meanwhile Israel, led by Shim'on Peres, must understand that we will not tolerate any delay in the redeployment of the Israeli army in Hebron or in the withdrawal of the Jewish settlements built there.

Palestinian Affairs: Qaddumi on Peace Process, Palestinian Issues

MM0703175196 London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH in Arabic Mar 96 pp 19-21

[Interview with Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO's Political Department, by Yasir al-Za'atirah; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Za'atirah] We begin by asking on what square does Faruq Qaddumi stand in relation to the Oslo plan which is now presented as almost the only solution to the Palestinian question?

[Qaddumi] Abu-al-Lutf [Qaddumi] stands not on a square but on vast spacious grounds. I mean that there is a Palestinian national charter to which I am committed and [Palestine] National Council [PNC] resolutions to which I am committed. I am committed to that national set which emphasizes that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

[Al-Za'atirah] But what is the PLO's position on all current developments? Everything is taking place on the ground under the Palestinian Authority [PA] but the PLO is absent, and when it happens to be present it is present along the line charted by Yasir 'Arafat and along the Oslo line.

[Qaddumi] Very regrettably, it is not absent. All that was signed in the name of the PLO. As we have applied democratic principles, when the majority approves something it has a right to proceed. We have laid down democratic principles as a basis for dealing but that does not at all mean that we accept the Oslo line. These are ill-omened agreements, from Oslo to Cairo, to elsewhere. The PNC had agreed to a political settlement and agreed to attend the Madrid peace conference but Oslo departs from the basis of the political settlement and from UN resolution 242 which calls for withdrawal. It was a blow to Arab coordination as a strong negotiating card for us. We also absolved the United States of responsibility as a guarantor of such a settlement because we went to Oslo secretly and away from the Arab negotiations in Washington. In doing so we lost three strong negotiation cards. As we had agreed to political settlement on the basis that was accepted along with us by our Arab brothers, we should have moved in that direction. In each of these agreements more concessions were made. The plot was that Rabin and the United States handled the issue in such a way as to be seen by the world as international, with Oslo as the terms of reference with its floating and general terms, and with the guarantor signing the agreement as just a witness. General references were made to the initiative based on international legitimacy (Security Council resolutions), with stipulations about redeployment of forces in the West Bank instead of withdrawal. This here is the chief of Palestinian diplomacy saying that all these agreements are full of violations of international legitimacy. Neither the United Nations, the UN resolutions, nor [other] agreements constituted terms of reference.

[Al-Za'atirah] What is Faruq Qaddumi doing in the face of what is going on now?

[Qaddumi] First, declaration of opposition to these agreements, then consultation with all Palestinian political forces with a view to standing against these concessions, and then notification of the United Nations and all states of the PLO's objection to what is going on, beginning with the day I met with Norwegian Foreign Minister Holst and told him that I was one of those who had reservations about Oslo.

[Al-Za'atirah] But the PLO is not protesting against what is going on, because it is the party which signed.

[Qaddumi] I have told you that there are democratic principles. The central Council approved the Oslo agreement and so did the majority in the Executive Committee, but I reject it. Some of these people accept it. There have now been agreements between Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the PA, not the PLO.

[Al-Za'atirah] So this is just a confirmation of position.

[Qaddumi] Not a confirmation of position.... We are a political force to be reckoned with in the national, pan-Arab, and international fields.

[Al-Za'atirah] Pardon me, who do you mean by we?

[Qaddumi] Who are we? We, not you.

[Al-Za'atirah] You are saying we are political forces.

[Qaddumi] Yes, we are political forces — the forces of the Palestinian diplomacy within the political department as well as the Palestinian forces which reject these agreements.

[Al-Za'atirah] What will become of these forces when the PNC members enter [the Palestinian territory] and approve amendment of the charter?

[Qaddumi] I am all for the entry of all PNC members and all the refugees. Israel has not allowed in a single refugee. They should enter not as false witnesses who would be driven in and who would walk back. If they want to enter so be it but a PNC meeting inside [the territories] would mean acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the occupation which we totally reject.

[Al-Za'atirah] So you are against the principle of a PNC meeting inside.

[Qaddumi] Yes.

[Al-Za'atirah] So why are you asking them to enter?

[Qaddumi] All the Palestinian people have a right to enter if they wish because that is their homeland whether it is occupied or not.

[Al-Za'atirah] But the conditions for entry are known and clear.

[Qaddumi] I am saying that every Palestinian has a right to enter. We call for the repatriation of 750,000 refugees. We support return to the land although I personally refuse to do so because my entry would have some political significance in my capacity as the official in charge of Palestinian diplomacy. I will remain abroad and, God willing, will return after the complete elimination of the occupation and after the Palestinian brothers take control of the crossings. I would then have the honor of entering, with even a Palestinian child or Palestinian worker signing my Palestinian passport.

[Al-Za'atirah] But with the meeting of the PNC and the elected council, the PLO will end.

[Qaddumi] I do not believe that the PLO will end. Anyone wishing to leave the PLO may do so. If they seek to change these articles [in the charter], it would no longer be the PLO but an organization other than the PLO. Those who choose to delete these articles and leave the PLO would have nothing to do with the Palestinian National Charter or the PLO.

[Al-Za'atirah] Until when will this situation continue?

[Qaddumi] It will continue. We have been struggling for a century, and our struggle will continue.

[Al-Za'atirah] In the sense, for example, that the PLO would become representative of the Palestinians in the diaspora?

[Qaddumi] Of all the Palestinians at home and abroad. The Palestinian people believe that it is the sole legitimate representative, and historic symbols in the PLO testify to that.

[Al-Za'atirah] So, accordingly, would the formula become the PLO versus the Authority?

[Qaddumi] No, we are not against the Authority. We are against Israel. We cannot say "against the Authority." Your nose is part of you even though it may be crooked.

[Al-Za'atirah] Why did you urge the Palestinian people to participate in the elections?

[Qaddumi] I did not urge them to participate but I was not against participation in these elections because they were a phenomenon which meant that the Palestinian people wanted to express themselves and their identity and at the same time wanted to say: I want sovereignty, and I want to participate in building this homeland. These issues, this experiment, and the exercise of democracy were more important than those elected.

[Al-Za'atirah] But the exercise of democracy is not new to the Palestinian people who are doing that every day. The Palestinian civilian society is more advanced than all the Arab societies.

[Qaddumi] Yes, but they are torn apart and have been living in the diaspora. The Palestinians did not exercise that as Palestinians because of their displacement and refuge in various Arab countries. But they have had a high degree of education living in various countries and laying the foundations of democracy in the countries they live in.

[Al-Za'atirah] But the elected council is a council under the roof of the occupation, and, in the final analysis, the elections confirmed the legitimacy of Oslo.

[Qaddumi] No, Oslo's legitimacy was approved by the Central Council which is part of the PNC which represents the Palestinian people. What we actually want to say is that the institution, order and the law, what governs us, and what we agreed upon in the context of the PNC — we respect all that, and if some deviate we would tell them you have deviated and are therefore outside that context. If they amended the charter we would tell them: "You have departed from the framework of the Palestinian national movement."

[Al-Za'atirah] Even if they do not amend the charter, the charter is considered null under the Oslo agreements.

[Qaddumi] The charter is not null. It will remain a historical document for the Palestinian people. For example, how could I delete an article which says that the Palestinian territory is one geographical unit.

[Al-Za'atirah] So, would not agreement by the PNC and the elected council to cancel the charter mean that these people no longer represented the Palestinian people?

[Qaddumi] Yes.

[Al-Za'atirah] Who would represent the Palestinian people after that?

[Qaddumi] You and me.

[Al-Za'atirah] How?

[Qaddumi] The existing PNC members who do not approve.

[Al-Za'atirah] And would a national council be formed abroad?

[Qaddumi] Not at all. [There would remain] the PNC members who did not approve. In other words we would consider those [who did approve] to have left the PLO. But I do not believe that the matter would reach a point where those who struggled for 30 years would turn their backs on their history, principles, and patriotism and abrogate the charter. I cannot imagine that, and I do not for a moment believe that those who struggled for long years and who made sacrifices would call for change of the charter, not unless they go made, and I do not think they will go mad.

[Al-Za'atirah] But much madness, which we never thought would occur, has occurred. So, what if they did?

[Qaddumi] If is a negative letter in the Arab language. That question, therefore, cannot be addressed before that happens.

[Al-Za'atirah] Do you not believe that the elected council was created now in order to ratify the concessions in the final negotiations?

[Qaddumi] No. As stipulated in the agreement, that council has no right to deal with final issues. That is the task of the Executive Committee which is the political and legislative authority stemming from the PNC.

[Al-Za'atirah] But Yasir 'Arafat can secure the necessary votes in the Executive Committee for approval of the final negotiations.

[Qaddumi] If Brother Abu-'Ammar ['Arafat] managed to get the votes he then would not be alone and that would be the view of the majority which I would fully respect because they have brains and they are patriots.

[Al-Za'atirah] Do you believe that a revolutionary organization which has represented a people has a right to take the people to where the PLO has taken the Palestinian people on the claim of "consensus." Where did it get that consensus? To begin with, were the Executive Committee members elected?

[Qaddumi] No, the PLO has not reached that point, but let us examine the history and look at the PLO, beginning from the time we launched the armed struggle for long years. We suffered financial, economic, and political blockade because of the Gulf war and we almost could not find enough to eat because of our sound political stands. You know what happened in the Gulf war. Regional security proposals were made and then came the settlement plans. The United States used to refuse to let the PLO be a part of such settlement and it wanted people from inside [the territories] but the Arabs refused and said that it [the PLO] represented the Palestinian people. They insisted that we should not join with an independent delegation but under Jordanian cover. We thank the Jordanian brothers for giving us that cover. Then the Palestinian delegation became independent. Then the Soviet Union collapsed and there were many developments. We joined the settlement because if we did not — I was one who said "yes to the international peace conference." We were the ones who submitted the political report to the PNC. We were threatened and told your people would become like rabbits. We joined the settlement because we did not want to remain outside the course of history or we did not want to be thrown out of that course. That was the first time the Palestinian people joined an international conference. In Bludan, Hajj Amin [al-Husayni, Palestinian leader before 1948], was not in the Arab League. We then became members of the Arab League and we wanted this issue, which they had forgotten, to rise to the level of international attention. That is why our joining the settlement was an element of intelligence in Palestinian politics, a matter of self-preservation. We knew — in the report I submitted I said: "We may not achieve anything but we will preserve ourselves as people and organization."

[Al-Za'atirah] And then?

[Qaddumi] Then God saved us with the intifadah in the past years. The revolution was renewed with new forces, and so on. There can be no doubt that we should not be unfair to ourselves because the sinister forces which built Israel are still strong. As I said after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Gulf war which caused a major split in Arab ranks, greatly weakening the national and pan-Arab movements as well as Islamic movements.... Perhaps that was a new surge of nationalist movement to fill the gap after the Gulf war, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the changes that occurred in the world.

[Al-Za'atirah] But all that is no justification for an organization which had led a people to lead the same people to self-rule under occupation. All these are unacceptable justifications, historically and proceeding from the fact that the PLO was ahead of all Arab tracks in making concessions.

[Qaddumi] Your are arguing with me as a person who is affiliated [with a certain organization] not as a journalist and I will answer you also as an affiliated person.

[Al-Za'atirah] I am an affiliated person and have not excluded my affiliation in the interview.

[Qaddumi] Everything you are saying is wrong.

[Al-Za'atirah] Why?

[Qaddumi] You are engaging in a discussion not asking a press question.... Everything you say is wrong and those to whom you belong are wrong if they think the same.... First of all, we still have not achieved a solution and are still on the road. Everyone has views. How can you tell right from wrong? If the majority of the people say yes then the majority of the people are right.

[Al-Za'atirah] Who said the majority of the people say yes?

[Qaddumi] Yes, these elections, feeble as they are, showed that they say yes.

[Al-Za'atirah] That is not sufficient proof.

[Qaddumi] You are not arguing as a journalist.

[Al-Za'atirah] This is a press dialogue.

[Qaddumi] No, no.

[Al-Za'atirah] I represent a paper and represent a popular trend, and I have a right to reply.

[Qaddumi] So you are actually not working in journalism ... and you are not asking questions but determining facts.

[Al-Za'atirah] I am not determining facts. I am answering you. You say that the council is representative and I say that in unions and in Palestinian sectors elections the opposition forces won over 50 percent of the votes.

[Qaddumi] And so what?

[Al-Za'atirah] The council and the elections alone are not representative. Furthermore, two thirds of the Palestinian people are abroad. Who asked their opinion?

[Qaddumi] Give me your questions and I will answer them.

[Al-Za'atirah] Fine. Who represents the two-thirds of the Palestinians living abroad?

[Qaddumi] The PLO represents the Palestinians at home and abroad.

[Al-Za'atirah] But the PLO has accepted a partial solution which excludes them.

[Qaddumi] If that was accepted. Governments could sometimes accept something and then another comes [that would not]. The government of al-Nahhas [in Egypt], for example, once accepted something then came 'Abd-al-Nasir and annulled all these agreements. It does not mean that governments.... A constitution changes.... A constitution remains but phased policies change. Some persons might at one stage fall but the constitution which underlines the main principles and the general picture remains. For example, when Jordanian governments change, it is the daily policies which change.

[Al-Za'atirah] The question is what is the maximum the PLO can do to the Palestinian people's rights to negate its representation of them?

[Qaddumi] The main task, especially for the Political Department, is to tackle the problem of the refugees because it is a major problem, and we do not approve of this current course. I have said clearly and diplomatically that as a result of that line every agreement has more shortcomings than the previous one, and so on.

[Al-Za'atirah] Meaning that every agreement is worse than the preceding one.

[Qaddumi] Yes, 100 percent. I have said so.

[Al-Za'atirah] That means that we are facing another catastrophe in the final negotiations.

[Qaddumi] No, no. That does not mean that those people would not collide with the reality. Their task will fail and so will the settlement.

[Al-Za'atirah] What would you do if they crossed out the refugees and wrote off Jerusalem?

[Qaddumi] Who are you? Let us be. This is our business. You are journalists but we are the ones who mobilize the masses and build the PLO institutions abroad. The majority of the Palestinian people abroad are 100 percent against that line. We incite and mobilize people against that line but we know that we are unable [to score] at this stage because of the forces supporting that line, be they Arab or foreign. That is why we should not fight a battle at the wrong time.

[Al-Za'atirah] Meaning that the present stage is one of incitement?

[Qaddumi] Of mobilization, explanation, clarification, and building of institutions abroad. In other words, the Palestinian institutions abroad must continue. Perhaps financial shortages are one of the reasons but we say that men bring funds not vice versa.

[Al-Za'atirah] Is it to be understood from that that Faruq Qaddumi's relations with the Authority depend on the results of the final negotiations?

[Qaddumi] The Authority.... We.... The Executive Committee is the body from which the Authority derives its political and legislative powers.

[Al-Za'atirah] Let us move to the question of confederation and relations with Jordan. Peres's view is now widely raised and it seems that there is a semi-Jordanian-Palestinian agreement that confederation is the solution or the inlet to solving the problem of independent Palestinian state. How do you view that?

[Qaddumi] Woe to Peres.... That is not Peres' idea. Woe a thousand times to Peres. That was approved by the PNC, after a referendum for the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples.

[Al-Za'atirah] But the PNC said that that would be after the state is created not before.

[Qaddumi] That is true.

[Al-Za'atirah] But the Israeli view is that such a solution should be before a state is born.

[Qaddumi] Peres by nature exaggerates and lies. We know that about him. we are not linked to Peres. Whoever wants to be linked could do so but the PNC resolution stipulates that a confederation would be between two independent states. That is the text.

[Al-Za'atirah] A question which you might consider conditional. What if there is no independent Palestinian state.

[Qaddumi] That would mean that the Palestinian identity would end. This is what Jordan told brother Abu-'Ammar: "We are for an independent Palestinian state. We could discuss relations after that."

[Al-Za'atirah] Some forces within the Authority lean more toward links with the Israelis than going the Arab way.

[Qaddumi] I have no knowledge of such people.

Palestinian Affairs: Police Commander on Search for Hamas Activists

JN0703181496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1700 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a news conference at the Police Directorate today, Brigadier Ghazi al-Jabali, director general of the Palestinian Police Force, said the measures adopted by the Palestinian force over the past few days have enabled us to influence [al-ta'thir] the Hamas Movement [Islamic Resistance Movement]. He added: Without these measures, the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions would not have announced in its recent statement that it has suspended its military operations against Israel. He said that these measures will help us halt the bombing operations and prevent any other illegal activities.

Al-Jabali said that Muhammad Abu-Wardah belongs to a group that includes three other members who were arrested in Ramallah. Based on their confessions, other members were arrested. The search for the principal link in the group and other suspects is now under way.

Al-Jabali said that if Hamas is a political movement, then we will have nothing to do with it and it can carry out its party activities legitimately. The ban is against its military wing.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Zahhar on Legislative Council, Hamas Stand

JN0703213196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1250 GMT 7 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Hamas Gaza leader Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar by Ibrahim Milhim in the Jericho studio—live; from the "Today's Events" feature]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Milhim] Let us begin with the most important event in the Palestinian arena, the convocation of the Legislative Council. How do you assess this event. Most probably, you followed the event on television.

[Al-Zahhar] Yes. First of all, it goes without saying that every person in Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and every Palestinian citizen support any step in the direction of political pluralism and democracy in the areas from which the occupation was removed, even if only partially. The event is important to the Palestinian people. It will acquire more importance if this council succeeds in faithfully tackling the Palestinian people's causes and firmly confronts all attempts to harm the Palestinian people's achievements or wreck their national unity.

From this premise, the brother members shoulder a heavy burden. We hoped the elections would take place under circumstances and conditions far better than the ones under which they were held. But now that they have taken place, we want to activate this council so that it can tackle the people's concerns and enhance the concept of political pluralism. It can lay new foundations for the era that will follow the complete removal of the occupation so that the state can be established on sound bases.

[Milhim] How can Hamas help make the Legislative Council experience a success?

[Al-Zahhar] We will support every decision that serves the Palestinian people's interests. We will confront the decisions that we believe harm the Palestinian people's interests through political means and offer advice in presenting arguments. The violence to which we have become accustomed or to which the masses have become accustomed is not the solution to the intra-Palestinian differences.

[Milhim] Is the Hamas military wing's decision to hand over its weapons in response to the political wing's call part of this new policy?

[Al-Zahhar] I would like to remind you that this policy is not a new one. To avoid any misunderstanding, our policy even before the advent of the Palestinian Authority [PA] has been that we welcome the PA and do not want to have more than one authority. Decisions were made, even before the Authority's arrival, on the issue of the agents and others. In the wake of the Filastin mosque incidents, our stand was one of appeasement and a factor in closing Palestinian ranks. We sat down with the PA more than once to settle problems. We crowned all this by going to Cairo to discuss a formula on how to deal with each other and seek an appropriate formula for coexistence among all the Palestinian people's political factions. This policy is not new, but it is an important step that was made at a specific and sensitive juncture when we in Gaza and some of our brothers in the West Bank saw fit to address the military wing and ask it to stop so that a formula can be found to activating our national rights, which Israel stole at an appropriate moment.

[Milhim] Did the recent military moves by Hamas' military wing depart from the political will?

[Al-Zahhar] No, I would not say that. The policy of the right wing since the inception of occupation has been dependent on its own estimations and policies. There was no linkage between the political and military positions. However, we have interfered, even though it has been dangerous because it may cause some enemies of Hamas or the politicians to make insinuations. The situation requires that we give advice to everyone at the right moment. We are glad that our advice was heeded. I wish the other parties would ease the tension, both on the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

[Milhim] So, it can be said that the political wing of Hamas controlled the military wing.

[Al-Zahhar] The issue is not one of control. However, I would like to remind people that there is a saying by Prophet Muhammad, may God's peace and blessings be upon him: Muslims are equal in blood; they should be united against others, and their security should be defended by all of them, regardless of their status. Based on this saying and on the fact that any person can defend Muslims' security, we deemed it necessary for us to give our opinion within the framework of Islamic action. Therefore, we made this good effort alongside our brothers in Fatah, the Front, and the other Palestinian factions. Our call was observed. This call will come to fruition if Israel responds favorably, eases the tension, refrains from escalating the situation, and changes the policy it has adopted over the past months and years. We call on our brothers in the Authority to help provide a conducive atmosphere for this.

[Milhim] Has their been an assessment of the negative repercussions of the recent incidents?

[Al-Zahhar] As you know, these negative repercussions were caused by Israel before the recent incidents. As you may recall, Israel made many closures for no reason. Even before the last operation, Israel closed the crossings for 10 days for no reason whatsoever. During the process of redeployment, the crossings were closed for weeks for no reason. Also, during the feasts, they were closed on the pretext of security. You know Israel is pressuring the PLO and the Palestinian Authority in many ways. What about the safe passage, withdrawal from the rest of territories, and other negative practices? Israel wants to empty the agreement of its content. From the outset, we thought that Israel might succeed in dominating the Palestinian decision — something we reject.

[Milhim] Then there is a good understanding of the need not to give Israel any pretexts to step up the collective punishment and escape the Oslo agreement.

[Al-Zahhar] Yes, we want all the Palestinian factions, both opponents and proponents of this agreement, to at least have some sort of cooperation to stand up to Israel. But we, as the opposition, should not bear the responsibility of Israel's failure. I want to say that Yahya 'Ayyash was killed because Israeli military security failed to protect Rabin. The Palestinians were forced to pay the price — the price was Yahya 'Ayyash's life. The net result was a series of operations against Israel as a reaction to Yahya 'Ayyash's killing. Therefore, I would like to note that Israel should not continue to adopt the policy of making the Palestinians pay the price for Israel's foolish policy. This approach has proved to be a failure.

[Milhim] If the movement was offered any portfolios in the new cabinet, what would its position be?

[Al-Zahhar] When this offer is made, it will be discussed and an answer will be given.

[Milhim] Thank you, Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, a Hamas Movement official.

[Al-Zahhar] Thank you.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Aide Denies Split, Arms Surrender Order

MM0803125596 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 8 Mar 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Jamal Khashuqji: "Leading Hamas Figure Tells AL-HAYAH: Arms Handover Statement False"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London — A leading Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) figure in the West Bank has described as false the recent statement attributed to Hamas regarding the movement's order to members of its military wing to hand over their weapons and bomb-making equipment [mu'iddat al-tafjir]. He said: "A decision of that kind would not be issued by one quarter in Hamas. It would be issued after the approval of all the concerned quarters inside, that is, in Gaza and the West Bank, and abroad, in addition to the ['Izz-al-Din] al-Qassam Battalions." He described the recent statement as "false, and it follows a series of statements over which question marks have been raised and which are designed to cause confusion among Hamas supporters and the Palestinian people."

AL-HAYAH telephoned the leading figure, who asked to remain anonymous because he is wanted by both the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] and the Israeli authorities. The leading figure decided to call AL-HAYAH from a safe place. It was discovered later that he had been arrested by the PNA after the interview.

The leading figure said that the situation in the cities of the West Bank "resembles a state of war, and the people here are living in fear because of the continuing storming operations." He said that "most Hamas leaders are being chased, and so are those who belong to it. Most of them do not sleep in their homes."

He spoke of "the state of fear experienced by the Palestinians living near Israeli settlements." He said that they "fear that a massacre might be committed against them by extremist Jews along the lines of what happened in the Sabra and Shatila camps in Lebanon during the Israeli invasion in 1982."

He added: "Even mosques are besieged by PNA elements who scrutinize the identity of anyone they suspect."

On the number of wanted people and whether a list of them has been announced, he said: "I do not know the specific number or the names...anyone belonging to or sympathizing with Hamas or active in any Islamic societies is wanted."

On the atmosphere of ambiguity and confusion caused by the various statements issued by Hamas or "the Disciples of Yahya 'Ayyash" after the recent bombings, he said: "The only thing of which we are certain is the statement read out by brother Mustafa al-Liddawi (Hamas representative) in Beirut. And also the appeal made in Gaza by (Muhammad) al-Sham'ah and (Mahmud) al-Zahhar to suspend operations. With regard to anything else, there are big question marks. We have corroborated information that statements are forged in the Preventive Security office in Gaza with a view to portraying the movement as divided. They continue to forge statements openly."

On reports of the uncovering of Hamas cells responsible for recent bombings he said that the Israelis "have begun to achieve results in the investigation, thanks to the PNA's cooperation." He pointed out that the "group suspected of carrying out the Jerusalem and Ashqelon operations was uncovered after inquiries made by the PNA at the Teachers' Institute in Ramallah." He added: "The PNA extracted the information from young men who were subjected to severe torture at the hands of Palestinians." On the confessions of the defendant Muhammad Abu-Raddah, who was sentenced to life imprisonment by a Palestinian military court in Jericho last Wednesday, he said: "I do not know the truth about Abu-Raddah's involvement, but I believe it is merely for show. He was sentenced and (President) 'Arafat endorsed the sentence within two hours. However, I know that his confessions, which were carried by Palestinian television and Israeli stations, namely that Hamas wanted through the operations to help the Likud win the next Israeli elections, were made in the office of Jibril al-Rujub (official in charge of Preventive Security). They did that to corroborate their allegation that Hamas is working for the Likud — which is not true. We are not interested in the Likud's or Labor's victory. Our aims are strategic and bigger than that."

Asked about those who issued the orders to carry out the recent operations, and whether political activists in Hamas are responsible for them, he said: "These operations fall in the natural framework of the military wing's activities, and no decision has been issued to halt the resistance. Yahya 'Ayyash's assassination reinforced these convictions. 'Ayyash was very important to Hamas and the Palestinian people. Hundreds of thousands of people attended his funeral and demanded revenge. However, the operations are not carried out just to avenge 'Ayyash's assassination. We in Hamas still believe that the occupation still exists and we are entitled to resist it." Asked whether the situation has changed since the elections and the dialogue in Cairo between Hamas and the PNA, he said: "It was agreed in Cairo not to embarrass or put pressure on the PNA through military operations. The recent operations were carried out away from the self-rule areas." He noted that "Hamas did not carry out any operations during the elections. If it had done so, there would have been no elections." He added: "The Authority should demonstrate its good intentions. Three of the people who negotiated in Hamas's name in Cairo are being detained." He pointed out that "both Shaykh 'Abd-al-Fattah Dukhan, a Hamas founder, and Hasan Yusuf are held by the PNA in Gaza, and that 'Abd-al-Khaliq al-Natshah is held in Hebron by Israeli authorities."

Asked whether Hamas is committed to a truce now, he said: "Actually I do not know exactly. The situation is difficult, and contacts are difficult to make as a result of the security situation, which resembles a state of war. The only thing that represents Hamas now is its recent statement, read out in Beirut by al-Liddawi, who said that Hamas is willing to deal positively with any political initiative aimed at calming conditions and safeguarding the Palestinian people's rights. Then it would be possible to talk about a truce." Asked whether his views represent the majority in Hamas, or whether he represents Hamas in the West Bank only in view of what has been reported about splits within the movement, he said: "Hamas is not split, nor will it split, God willing. There is no split in Hamas. There are differing views which have never reached the point of a split. We are experiencing conditions that have imposed on us geographical, not political, divisions. There is a bloc in Gaza, a bloc in the West Bank, and another abroad. And there are those working underground and activists operating openly. I stress that no strategic decision will be taken without the approval and accord of all the said parties."

Algeria

Algeria: Makhloufi—OPEC Must Hold Extraordinary Meeting on Iraq

LD0703160896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer] Algeria this week urged OPEC countries to step up discipline and cohesion. Supply is more important than demand on the oil market. Amar Makhloufi, the energy minister, who is back from Vienna where he took part in a meeting of the [OPEC] monitoring committee, spoke to Badia Haddad about the recommendation made in that respect:

[Begin Makhloufi recording] The committee had the opportunity to make recommendations to the conference because [words indistinct] will submit to OPEC ministers to make sure that cohesion can be stepped up further and quotas currently in force can be increasingly heeded to enable the market to meet the needs of the organization, while each of the member countries is understandably attempting to safeguard its income as best it can. [end recording]

[Announcer] Iraq has accepted to exchange oil for food as a temporary arrangement pending the lifting of the embargo in force since August 1990. An OPEC conference is expected to be convened as soon as there is an agreement on this. Mr Makhloufi:

[Begin Makhloufi recording] According to the first available reports, Iraq has reportedly been allowed to export between 700,000 and 750,000 barrels per day depending on the current price. Depending on this agreement, the organization will have to react immediately by convening an extraordinary meeting to see how Iraq can find its place in the market and to ensure that such a return does not come as a shock. [end recording]

[Announcer] OPEC experts will meet in Vienna on 11 March to look into the best ways to check production quotas and especially to examine the organization's long-term strategy.

Algeria: Zeroual Discusses 'Objectives' for 1996

LD0603224496 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 6 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The council of ministers met today at the presidency of the republic under the chairmanship of President Zeroual. Opening the session, the president spoke about the current stage of national recovery and its political and economic perspectives. In this respect, the president stressed that the full start of an allround revival of our national economy and completion of our democratic process constitute two decisive objectives requiring the mobilization of all national potentials and capabilities to achieve them. Thus, he said, 1996 will be an important year in the economic and political life of our country, and it should be considered as an important stage that will tangibly contribute to the return to a real growth of our national economy and a normalization of the functioning of our institutions.

Speaking about the important role of citizens and their contributions to the realization of these objectives, the president said that permanent commitment and full determination of citizens constitute the primary condition and decisive factor for ensuring success. Regarding the social aspect of the economic reforms that constitute one of the main concerns of the state, the president said that tackling them requires more efforts from all the parties concerned with the social future of the most needy sections of the population. [passage omitted]

The president said that we cannot and should not live above the real conditions offered by our national economy, unless one willingly seeks the permanent harming of the future generations for whose welfare we are heavily responsible. Thus, initiating a constructive dialogue between the public authorities and the social and economic partners is the appropriate way to attain a social contract liable to guarantee the various necessary equilibriums for a genuine return to a growth of our national economy.

Speaking about the second aspect of the national recovery process, namely the completion of the necessary democratic process for ensuring the stability of our institutions, the president recalled that on the occasion of the commemoration of 24 February, he emphasized that the state is keen to move steadily and take responsible initiatives to present to all national forces with a view to completing the democratic process which is considered as a right for the Algerians. The president said: If the 16 November election was a great national victory for all the Algerian people, it was also a great national victory for those who sought to play down its importance and dimensions in order to undermine any hope, and to condemn a great people like ours to live in a permanent crisis, which it had been able to overcome in an outburst of national pride [sentence as heard]. However, President Zeroual said that the lessons that should be drawn from our harsh experiences and their causes should shed enough light on the track of our future actions.

The president said: We must not move hastily or improvize things in order to avoid results that once again the national community would not be able to bear. In this respect, all the necessary conditions and measures for a genuine pluralist expression must be made available to ensure the success of a big step that will be taken for the benefit of the Algerian people. For this end, there will be large-scale consultation over these necessary measures as soon as possible with all the national forces. The president further said that with rigor, clarity, and full transparency, the state will undertake great tasks in response to the aspirations of our people, and the results will be an heritage for all Algerians. [passage omitted]

At today's meeting, the council of ministers studied and adopted the draft government program which will be submitted to the National Transitional Council. Speaking at the end of the debate on the contents of the program, the president made comments and gave guidelines about the program in question. He said that the program, which had met with the free approval of the people on 16 November, was the beginning of a response to the legitimate and multiple aspirations of the citizens. The president stressed that he approves the program and the method of action of the government which will ensure that the realization of the objectives of the program will be clearly reflected in the daily life of citizens.

President Zeroual said that the results will be assessed, and he urged the government to focus all its action toward the realization of the dual objective of the national recovery process. He also said that while the rescheduling of the Algerian debts is just a temporary stage imposed on us by the pressure of heavy foreign debts, it is not a solution to our problems, and it cannot be resorted to all the time. But because our economic capabilities are still weak, our institutions consume more than what they produce, as is known by all, he said. [passage omitted]

Algeria: Explosion Damages Pipeline Supplying Electric Power Plant

LD0703190196 Paris Radio France International in French 1730 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Algeria, an explosion on the night of 5-6 March damaged a gas pipeline supplying an important electric power plant located in Cap Djinet. Several districts of Algiers were left without electricity for many hours as a result.

Egypt

Egypt: MENA Confirms World Summit on Terror Expected 13 Mar

NC0703211196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2030 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Mar (MENA)—MENA has learned that in their telephone conversation today, President Husni Mubarak and U.S. President Bill Clinton discussed the convening of an international conference to save the Middle East peace process. Several Arab and European countries sponsoring the peace process are expected to be invited to the conference.

MENA learned the conference will focus on ways to advance the peace process in the region and address the repercussions of the recent terrorist operations, which caused the suspension of the peace process on all tracks.

President Husni Mubarak had called for the convening of an international conference to fight terrorism, which has become an international phenomenon threatening security and peace.

In the past few hours, President Mubarak held telephone contacts with King Husayn of Jordan, Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres to discuss the necessary arrangements to save the peace process and discuss the issue of peace in the region.

MENA learned the international summit will be held on Wednesday [13 March]. The venue will be fixed in the next few hours, but it is expected to be an Egyptian city overlooking the Red Sea.

U.S. State Department sources announced that President Clinton will take part in the summit. Israel radio said the summit will be held in the Egyptian city of Taba and that President Clinton will attend.

Egypt: Mubarak, 'Arafat Discuss Peace Process on Telephone

NC0703204496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1820 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak held a telephone conversation with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat this evening. During the conversation, the two leaders exchanged views on the efforts to contain the crisis through which the peace process on the Palestinian track is passing.

Egypt: Musa Returns From Gaza, Comments on Peace

*NC0703212896 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1745 GMT 7 Mar 96*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 7 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa returned to Cairo from Gaza this evening. He chaired Egypt's delegation to the opening ceremony of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

Musa said upon arrival that he is bringing a message to President Husni Mubarak from Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat in reply to Mubarak's message, which Musa delivered to 'Arafat during their meeting in Gaza today.

Musa said the significance of the opening of the Palestinian Legislative Council today is that the Palestinians are determined to complete the peace process and respect all their commitments under the agreements they signed.

He said the Council is important because it, the legislative authority, and the judicial authority are the three main components for establishing the Palestinian state, where the Palestinians will practice their right to self-determination.

He said Egypt's participation in the opening of the Council constitutes support for the Palestinian Authority [PA] and its objectives at a delicate time for the peace process. He said Egypt believes the implementation of the agreements signed by the Palestinians and Israel is a basic requirement for the peace process and its continuation.

Musa said the Palestinian president stressed this position in the face of the extremism coming from both sides, as peace is a joint responsibility for the two sides.

Musa said he and the Palestinian president reviewed the developments of the peace process in light of the recent incidents in Israel, their reasons, motives, and dangers.

He said he and 'Arafat analyzed the latest developments, and added that consultations over all issues will continue. He said an agreement between the Palestinians and Israel is necessary and the continuation of the peace process under all circumstances is important.

He explained that the continuation of the peace process is necessary because its discontinuation means success for the extremists and enemies of peace on both sides. He said the recent acts of violence negatively affect the peace process and the just cause of the Palestinian people.

The foreign minister said the will of peace is stronger and the extremists and enemies of peace on both sides must be defeated because there can be no security and stability without a lasting peace.

He stressed that security cannot be imposed, and if imposed, its continuation cannot be guaranteed. The only guarantee for security, he said, is the continuation of peace, the commitment of both sides, and the implementation of what was agreed upon.

He stressed the need to achieve peace as soon as possible. For Egypt, he explained, peace means the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination.

The foreign minister affirmed that Egypt continues to hold contacts with all sides in a bid to promote the issue of peace. He said that he contacted Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti yesterday on the latest developments. Musa added that contacts are also continuing with the Palestine side and Israel as well.

'Amr Musa maintained that Egypt's stance focuses on asking all sides to honor their pledges and to forge ahead along the road of peace. The foreign minister said that the siege imposed on the West Bank and Gaza and the mass punishment are not a solution, stressing the need for the two sides to abide by the security measures. He pointed out that President 'Arafat declared this unquestionably in his speech before the Legislative Council.

'Amr Musa said that the PA's condemnation of the recent acts of violence was clear and so was its determination to continue its peace efforts. The foreign minister said that the entire international community rejects violence and terrorism and supports the PA's endeavors for peace. This was evident in the international and European presence at the celebrations on the occasion of the opening of the Legislative Council, 'Amr Musa added. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Foreign Minister on Relations With Jordan, Regional Issues

*JN0703192596 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English
7 Mar 96 pp 12, 7*

[Report on interview with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa by Lima Nabil in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo — Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has described Jordanian-Egyptian relations as strong and based on mutual respect and common interests.

"In reaffirmation of their strong ties Jordan and Egypt are scheduled to hold a meeting for their higher joint committee in the coming month because the two countries are determined to intensify all efforts towards protecting their common interests and fulfilling the Arab nation's goals," Mr. Musa said in an interview with the JORDAN TIMES.

"Furthermore, the leaders of Egypt, Jordan and Palestine are planning a summit meeting, but they are yet to agree on its date," said the minister. "The mini-summit's agenda will mainly include the peace process, tripartite coordination to give impetus to the peace process and arrangements for future regional cooperation."

Mr. Musa stressed that the Israeli-Palestinian track was the most important in all the Arab-Israeli peace talks because "one it is successful, it makes the Middle East peace more endurable."

"Unless the Palestinians regain the right to self-determination and exercise that right peace cannot be complete," he added.

Referring to Egypt's role in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations over a final settlement, Mr. Musa said: "Our stand vis-a-vis the sensitive issues like the refugees, the Jewish settlements and Jerusalem is quite clear. Our stand towards Jerusalem is similar to that of the Arab and Islamic nation, which considers any changes in the status of the city illegal. Hence we do not recognise Israel's annexation of Jerusalem whose fate should be subject to the outcome of the negotiations.

"As to the refugees question, which has not been discussed in a comprehensive manner, we believe that the Palestinian refugees should be given the option of repatriation or compensation. The question of displaced Palestinians is easier to solve and the issue is being tackled by a committee grouping Palestine, Israel, Jordan and Egypt. In Egypt's view these displaced people should be immediately repatriated."

Referring to the suicide bombings in Israel carried out by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad groups, Mr. Musa expressed hope that they would not affect the peace process.

"It is hoped that the peace process will continue and that the schemes of elements on the two sides considered hostile to peace be aborted," he added.

"The third and final phase of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations are the real negotiations, but it is regrettable to see that these are being affected by the acts of extremist elements on both sides who are working to ruin all chances of peace," Mr. Musa added.

"I cannot rule out that Israeli extremist groups are involved in the latest attacks. Some Palestinian sources have expressed their belief that these bombings were perpetrated by extremists from both sides," Mr. Musa said.

On Egypt's effort to secure Israel's withdrawal from Hebron, he said the latest incidents might have laid further obstacles. These attacks and extremism aim at ruining the peace process and the negotiations and therefore plans for withdrawal and redeployment of forces should go ahead without delay so as to defeat the objectives of the enemies of peace." [no opening quotation marks as published]

On Iraq, the minister said any change in the regime there should be brought about from inside the country because this is a purely Iraqi concern.

"We are concerned with securing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and ending the people's sufferings. We hope that sanctions will be lifted," the minister said.

"U.N. Security Council Resolution 986 is bound to reduce to a great extent the sufferings of the Iraqi people and could open the door for the implementation of the remaining council resolutions and the eventual lifting of sanctions," he added.

"However, if the Iraqis decided to consult with us about anything we have no objection because although we have political differences we are Arabs and deal with one another on brotherly basis," he said.

On Sudan he demanded that Khartoum respond to a U.N. Security Council resolution and extradite those who are suspected of taking part in any attempt on the life of President Husni Mubarak.

"This is an important question for Egypt. But we have no intention to isolate Sudan. All that we want is for Khartoum to hand over these suspects to Ethiopia to face trial," he stressed.

Commenting on the return of Husayn Kamil to Iraq, he said: "There are major question marks about the whole affair from the start. We cannot rule out that the whole scenario was staged, but the regret to see that it ended in a tragedy."

He said that Husayn Kamil had tried to find haven in other Arab countries which turned down his overtures because of the suspicion revolving around his flight from his country.

Egypt: U.S. Aid Said 'Wasted,' of No Benefit to People

NC0703180096 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 3 Mar 95 p 12

[From the "Word of Love" column by Muhammad al-Hayawan]

[FBIS Translated Text] The United States is talking about reducing U.S. aid to Egypt after the comprehensive peace. Egyptian citizens will not feel the difference if the United States maintains, reduces, or even suspends the aid package altogether, because Egyptian citizens did not feel that the United States was providing aid in the first place. Where did the U.S. aid go?

Certain U.S. officials describe the aid by saying that the poor in a rich country are paying this money to the rich in poor countries. By this they mean, of course, that the U.S. aid goes into the pockets of certain important figures, without benefiting the Egyptian people.

It is noticeable that U.S. aid to Egypt is completely ignored in the media. The director of the U.S. aid program once complained to me about this. He said: We have given Egypt enormous amounts of money to build power plants the output of which exceeds that of the High Dam. However, the Egyptian press continues to give credit to the Russians for building the High Dam, and makes no mention of what the United States has done to generate electricity! I have written more than once about U.S. aid and how it is wasted on items for opulence, such as automobiles, offices, allowances, and incentives. As a result, nothing is left for the common Egyptian citizen, who does not feel the merit of U.S. aid because it has not benefited him and because it goes into the pockets of certain individuals — so much so that it is being said that the United States chooses certain individuals, whom it considers to be its supporters in the country, to oversee the spending of the aid. It is also said that the U.S. insists on choosing these people, and that it ignores the misspending of this aid because it does not want to accuse its supporters of getting rich from the aid.

The only time U.S. aid to Egypt stopped was during the periods of economic siege of Egypt. After the Camp David Accords the aid increased and was given to both Egypt and Israel, but the latter always gets the lion's share. Israel gets more than its actual share and it gets technical aid that is more important than any amount of money. Israel has access to U.S. scientific and military secrets and equipment that are more sophisticated than what Egypt obtains.

If the U.S. financial aid to Egypt is cut, the U.S. technical and scientific aid to Israel will still continue. It has become clear that the United States fully believes in the continued superiority of Israel over all the Arabs. It wants to impose normalization on all the Arabs without giving them the chance to discuss its pros and cons. The United States considers enemies those who are hostile to, or refuse to rush toward, Israel. Since the establishment of Israel, this has always been the problem between the United States and the Arabs — because the United States wants to impose Israel's hegemony on the Arab world.

Libya

Libya: Group Claims Attempt To Slay al-Qadhdhafi

MM0703173396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 7 Mar 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Talhah Jibril: "Al-Qadhdhafi Hints at Closure of Foreign Embassies in Libya"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Rabat — Informed sources have said that Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi is serious in his hint at the possible closure of all foreign embassies in Libya. However, it has not been possible to contact official Libyan sources to confirm these reports. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, a Libyan opposition organization has said that it tried to assassinate Libyan leader Col. Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, but it did not mention the date of the attempt. In a statement issued yesterday the Militant Islamic Group [al-jama'ah al-islamiyah al-musallahah] "claimed responsibility for an assassination attempt" against al-Qadhdhafi in Surt. "But it was God's will that al-Qadhdhafi failed to turn up." It added that after the operation was aborted, "one of the group's cells clashed with security elements" in Surt, and as a result "a number of people on both sides were killed."

Libya: Involvement in Israel Bomb Attacks Denied

LD0803111996 Paris Radio France International in French 0730 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Libyan foreign ministry claims to be surprised by some comments implicating Libya in the recent wave of bomb attacks in Israel. It rejects these accusations made, it said, by Western and Zionist circles who have a habit of wrongly criticizing Libya in order to justify the continuation of unjust sanctions against it, end of quote.

Morocco

Morocco: Filali, Iraq's Ramadan Discusses Bilateral Cooperation

LD0703221096 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Abdellatif Filali, prime minister and minister of foreign affairs and cooperation, met today the Iraqi Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan, who arrived in our country yesterday.

During this meeting Mr. Abdellatif Filali and Mr. Taha Yasin Ramadan discussed Moroccan-Iraqi relations and ways to strengthen them in various areas. The two sides also talked about the positive part that Morocco could play with regard to the relations between Iraq and the United Nations.

[Begin Ramadan recording] The talks that took place between us and the brother prime minister are part of the continuity of ties between the two sisterly countries and the exchange of views between them. Today's talks centered essentially on the development of bilateral cooperation between the two countries. This cooperation already exists but we discussed new ways of developing it.

We also discussed with brother Abdellatif the atmosphere surrounding our relationship with the Security Council and the positive role Morocco could play to overcome this stage. [end recording]

After affirming the identity of views between the two sides about the issues raised, Mr. Taha Yasin Ramadan said, with regard to the current talks between Iraq and the Security Council on the food-for- oil deal:

[Begin recording] [Ramadan] The talks are continuing. In any case the second round will start on 11 March. We hope that the same positive atmosphere that prevailed in the first round will continue to prevail in the second round with a view to finding solutions to the problems. We are very hopeful that we will reach an agreement.

[Unidentified correspondent] In this next round?

[Ramadan] Yes. No, I cannot say that this round will be final. The second round is still technical, but it will undoubtedly indicate more clearly how far we have gone toward reaching an agreement. [end recording]

Sudan

Sudan: Iraqi Republican Troops Reportedly Sighted in South

96LH0115A Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 8 Dec 95 pp 30-31

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum — John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army [SPLA] has made big advances in southern Sudan. It has surrounded Juba, the largest city in southern Sudan and the capital of the al-Istiwa'iyah Province, from the south and east. These successes have caused confusion among the regime leaders in Khartoum, prompting them to issue contradictory decisions and statements.

Can the rebel forces inflict heavy losses on the government forces and capture Juba? Can al-Bashir and his followers break the back of the rebellion, check the advance toward Nimule, and return the salute to Uganda, as Sudanese President 'Umar al-Bashir said on Harvest Day?

What is the truth about the presence of Iraqi forces fighting with the regular Sudanese Army? How many Iraqi troops are involved and where are they deployed?

Were Ugandan forces involved in last month's fighting when the SPLA forces advanced on nine axes and came within reach of Juba?

What was the purpose of the recent visit Sudanese Public Works Minister 'Uthman 'Abd-al-Qadir 'Abd-al-Latif paid to Baghdad? What were the contents of the message he delivered to Iraqi President Saddam Husayn?

Sources of the SPLA's Middle East office in Cairo told AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI that the Sudanese air force made frequent flights to Pibor, in the southern Upper Nile, at the beginning of last month, bringing 60 Russian CC55 tanks and a large number of armored troop carriers.

The sources added that the tanks carried the Iraqi Republican Guard identification. Their 120 Iraqi crews arrived in the area in stages.

The sources explained that Pibor is considered a strategic bridge in the Upper Nile region. The government uses it to send weapon and troop reinforcements to its forces in Juba, Kajo Kaji, and Magwe.

Before the arrival of the Iraqi tanks and experts in southern Sudan, Western reports said that Torit, in southwest Sudan, had fallen to the SPLA forces. Torit is considered the main headquarters of Colonel John Garang's forces. Western reports expected that the fall of Torit would cause strategic changes in the balance of power between the conflicting forces.

Southern sources linked the visit of the Sudanese minister to Iraq, his meeting with Saddam Husayn, and the arrival of the Iraqi equipment and experts in southern Sudan with the successes scored by the SPLA forces in recent weeks, including their capture of some positions and the town of Torit.

Reports by UN volunteer organizations in southern Sudan said that fierce fighting was taking place between the regular forces and the SPLA in the eastern al-Istiwa'iyah Province. The reports added that battles were taking place in the Fajk area, on the Sudanese-Ugandan border, and that Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's forces were supporting the SPLA in its battles against the Khartoum forces. The Ugandan forces helped the SPLA forces to capture Barajuk, Balataka, and Magwe.

The SPLA has not confirmed or denied these reports. It only said that the capture of Barajuk by its forces was an important military victory. It described the town as the most important strategic position, which will enable the SPLA to reach Nimule, which the Khartoum Government has been trying to capture for a long time.

The statement shows that Col. Garang's SPLA is attaching great importance to the capture of Nimule, on the Ugandan border, because this would facilitate the movement of aid from Uganda, which is on bad terms with the al-Bashir regime and on good terms with the SPLA.

Garang was a school mate of the Ugandan president during their primary education in Bor, in the equatorial swamp region. Their friendship continued and developed during their university education in Dar es-Salaam, capital of Tanzania.

The war fever in southern Sudan rose following the fall of Torit and the Ugandan forces' involvement in the Sudanese problem. The governments of the three al-Istiwa'iyah Provinces declared general mobilization and appealed to the people to go to training camps to defend their homeland and confront the Ugandan aggression.

Meanwhile, Jum'ah al-Fazani, secretary for unity in the Libyan Jamahiriyah, arrived in Khartoum as envoy of Colonel al-Qadhdhafi to try to restore stability in Sudanese-Ugandan relations. The envoy also visited Uganda and met with the Ugandan president. He also met with SPLA leader John Garang in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi.

The day the Libyan envoy arrived in Khartoum, Lieutenant General al-Bashir addressed a rally organized by the Popular Committee for Defense of the Faith and the Homeland. He accused Uganda and the imperialist countries of carrying out acts of aggression against Sudan.

The Sudanese Foreign Ministry's first undersecretary, earlier last week, denied reports that Tanzania was involved with Uganda in the aggression against Sudan. In a statement to journalists at the Foreign Ministry's weekly press briefing, al-Tijani Faysal said that hostile media have spread these rumors to cause a dispute between Khartoum and Dar es-Salaam.

The reports about this link came out because of Museveni's new relationship with Tanzania and the Tanzanian regime's past policy, which supported the present Ugandan president when he commanded the National Salvation Army and overthrew former President Idi Amin.

U.S. sources doubted the Ugandan-backed SPLA's ability to capture Juba. The sources think that the SPLA and the Ugandan forces cannot change the military balance of power, but they can restore the situation to what it was during the siege in 1991 and 1992. This situation could clearly jeopardize the humanitarian organizations' efforts to move relief aid to the people affected by the conflict in southern Sudan.

Informed sources said that the Sudanese Army still maintains its superiority over the Ugandan forces and the SPLA. It possesses large forces, which still have not used in the war.

The same sources affirmed that the Sudanese Air Force has been making semi-regular flights, transporting government and People's Defense Militia forces to Juba.

According to these sources, Iraqi forces were involved with Sudanese forces in shelling SPLA camps in Torit with Napalm bombs, killing or wounding 260 people. The sources did not rule out the possibility that the government forces, with the support of larger Iraqi forces, will launch a concentrated attack on Torit and Nimule. Khartoum has been preparing and planning this campaign for some time, but the SPLA's advance on various fronts led to its postponement.

The Sudanese opposition in Cairo has confirmed the arrival of Iraqi military equipment and supplies in Khartoum in preparation for the participation of Iraqi Republican Guard forces in the war in southern Sudan. Opposition sources said that 'Uthman 'Abd-al-Qadir visited Baghdad to remind the Iraqi leadership of Sudan's support for Iraq and the participation of Sudanese volunteers in its eight-year war against Iran. Sudan also supported Saddam Husayn's invasion of Kuwait and rejected foreign intervention.

Informed military sources in the Legitimate Command of the Sudanese Armed Forces said that, following this visit, Iraq supplied 50 Iraqi advanced Scud launchers, which proved their efficiency during the Kuwait liberation war, and a similar number of medium-range al-Husayn missiles.

The Sudanese Government, according to these sources, obtained five new Chinese MW2 [aircraft type in English] aircraft, which Iraqi military plants had developed on the basis of U.S. electronic technology Iraq obtained through secret cooperation programs with Pakistan. The MW2 aircraft has six weapon holds and its engine is similar to the Russian MiG engine.

Western military reports recently published by study centers in Washington said that despite the UN inspection of Iraqi military facilities, Iraqi scientists have developed military systems based on advanced nuclear technology. The reports expressed fear that Iraq might use its advanced weapons in another area of conflict, as the Iraqi regime has been contained and could not use these weapons against its neighbors. The sources thought that the Iraqi regime was likely to test these weapons in African arenas of conflict — either in Burundi, Rwanda, Angola, or southern Sudan.

Tunisia

Tunisia: Opposition Leader Ends Hunger Strike; Health Deteriorating

LD0703130996 Paris Radio France International in French 0730 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Health problems have caused Tunisian opposition leader Khemais Chemari to suspend his hunger strike, which he began on 22 February, after he suffered two serious attacks over the last few days. He has been protesting against what he says is harassment by the authorities of himself and of Mohamed Moaada, Movement of Socialist Democrats [MDS, main legal opposition party] secretary general [recently jailed for 11 years for involvement with Libyan agents], in his capacity as a member of the executive of the MDS, a deputy, and former vice president of the league of human rights [presumably Tunisian League of Human Rights].

Bahrain

Bahrain: Heir Apparent Addresses Press in London

MM0703163896 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 7 Mar 96 p 4

[Interview given by Bahraini Heir Apparent Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah to unidentified correspondents in London; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Bahraini Heir Apparent Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah yesterday ended a three-day working visit to London during which he met with the deputy prime minister and the secretaries of state for foreign affairs and defense, and headed the Bahraini side at the Joint Military Committee.

In an interview with a limited number of journalists before leaving London for Washington, Shaykh Hamad talked about democracy, defense, development, economic affairs, human rights, Iraq, and terrorism. The following is the text of the interview:

[Correspondent] The opposition has called for democratic elections to be held in Bahrain. Will that be achieved?

[Al Khalifah] We believe that Bahrain is a democratic country, although our democracy differs from your system. We shall develop our special system in order to widen its basis and reinforce it.

[Correspondent] Is it true that the recent demonstrations were staged as a result of the government's rejection of the democratic option?

[Al Khalifah] The Al Khalifah family has managed the country's affairs for over 20 years, during which the government relied on respect for citizens' opinions and held consultations with them. Our objective has always been to achieve development, stability, and progress. Those who draw their ideas from abroad did not give us any help in this context. The democratic principles they believe in are somewhat naive with regard to dealing with issues.

[Correspondent] Does the government intend to introduce some political reforms?

[Al Khalifah] Yes. We are about to introduce political reforms. Both the amir and the prime minister have said that they intend to give wider powers to the Consultative Council. Although the Consultative Council includes some nonelected members, they hold extensive talks on many issues such as the budget and the proposed laws, then pass their recommendations on to the Council of Ministers. We have started to hold free and fair elections to the joint working committees, the chamber of commerce and industry, all the professional associations such as the lawyers', doctors' and engineers' associations, etc.... Also, for over 75 years [as published] we have been holding elections to choose the members of the municipal councils.

It should be mentioned that the urban development that Bahrain has recently witnessed has changed it into a vast sprawling city where administrative divisions have disappeared. Elections of the municipal councils' members will be held as soon as the urban zones have been defined.

[Correspondent] Why does Bahrain spend vast amounts of money on defense?

[Al Khalifah] We do not spend more than other states in the region on defense.

[Correspondent] Can you cover your defense expenditure?

[Al Khalifah] Compared to our neighbors' expenditure on defense, ours represents a very small percentage of the gross national product. We try to maintain a force which is sufficient to defend ourselves and to help defend the region with our allies, if needed. During the Gulf war we fought proudly alongside our allies, and we are fully prepared to contribute to whatever is needed to guarantee security in the region.

[Correspondent] What are Bahrain's current development plans?

[Al Khalifah] Bahrain has achieved rapid development over the last 25 years. Oil has fed our economy over the last two decades. We have established a new oil industry which, by Gulf standards, is still limited. The aluminum smelter in Bahrain is one of the biggest and most successful industrial establishments in the world. Bahrain is also the Gulf's financial center. Of course, the sudden drop in oil prices and the reduced production quotas have slowed down the economic development process. We are, however, still planning to expand the other economic activities and encourage light industry, tourism, and service industries.

[Correspondent] There are reports that many of Bahrain's problems are of an economic nature. Is this true?

[Al Khalifah] The economy was not the cause of the recent disturbances. We did not lose a single workday in the main industries or the various activities. None of those arrested for setting fire to public establishments and destroying them was unemployed.

[Correspondent] Are you committed to a specific economic plan?

[Al Khalifah] There was a gap between our education system on the one hand, and our urgent modern technological needs on the other. Education and training need time. Both the public and private sectors spend some $50 million a year on training programs for the citizens in Bahrain and for preparing them to perform new functions. We currently spend about 50 percent of the appropriations on education in order to achieve that. Our objective is to provide job opportunities for all. However, sometimes, this objective may not conform with the requirements of modern technology.

[Correspondent] There are some reports of human rights violations in Bahrain, saying that some people are subjected to torture in your country. Would you care to comment on that?

[Al Khalifah] The law in Bahrain prohibits the use of torture. We adhere to the precepts of Islam which stress that the law applies to everyone without exception. We are ready to cooperate with any neutral third party to investigate the prisons in Bahrain and look at the prisoners' situation.

[Correspondent] There are allegations of police brutality. Is this true?

[Al Khalifah] The media organs have very much exaggerated the number of those who were arrested and the allegations of the security forces' brutality. The government is still determined to act calmly since the recent disturbances erupted. In fact, there was no curfew imposed in Bahrain, and we did not impose any mass sanctions. It is truly regrettable that, due to the acts of violence carried out by the demonstrators, some 12 people were killed, among them three or four policemen and some workers who were killed by the demonstrators. We shall continue to act calmly, but we are determined to stamp out violence.

[Correspondent] How would you characterize Bahrain's relations with Iraq?

[Al Khalifah] We feel deep sorrow for the Iraqi people's suffering. We very much hope that Iraq will implement the UN resolutions, because this would end the sanctions and alleviate the Iraqi people's suffering.

[Correspondent] Should the sanctions on Iraq be lifted or reduced?

[Al Khalifah] We hold the Iraqi Government responsible for the tragedy which has befallen the Iraqi people. Our position on this issue is in line with the U.S. position and that of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC]. Bahrain has become the headquarters of the special UN commission supervising the dismantling of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

[Correspondent] What is Bahrain's position on terrorism?

[Al Khalifah] Bahrain is making intense efforts to fight terrorism. We are cooperating with the U.S. Administration and the GCC states to watch individuals and organizations involved in terrorist acts. We also exchange information on the states that export terrorism and watch the movements of their suspected citizens in Bahrain.

Bahrain: Opposition—Detention of Women Shows Regime's 'Barbarity'

NC0703211396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1745 GMT 7 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Bahraini opposition leader Shaykh 'Ali Salman by Mahdi Hasan; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] The arrest of women in Bahrain is a strange measure. This is strange particularly because this course of action had not previously been conceived of in the Arab and Gulf countries. It has stirred up a wave of astonishment. Do you have any information regarding the detention of women and how many women have been detained?

[Salman] This is really surprising and shows the barbarity of the government. The government has exceeded all limits. The detention surprises observers. As is well known in the Arab, Gulf, and Islamic countries, a woman is highly respected and women are not arrested except in very exceptional cases. The detention of women in Bahrain is due to trivial reasons. A woman cannot be accused of arson, incitement, or similar charges. Really, the matter is that the detained women have a brother, husband, or son who is arrested and they display solidarity with the people demanding their just rights. This reaction by women has caused this cruel punishment. Women are detained in seclusion for long times and are exposed to physical and psychological torture and are not allowed to receive their family members or lawyers. Regrettably, the situation has gone beyond the limits and will make returning life to normal one day very difficult. Until yesterday, eight women had been detained.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Symposium Concludes on GCC Economies

LD0703151396 Riyadh SPA in English 1306 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Al-Dammam, March 7, SPA — A major symposium on the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] economies vis-a-vis regional and international economic blocs, wound up a two-day debate on Wednesday and participants sent cables of thanks and appreciation to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and the second deputy premier Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz for their kind patronage of the symposium, excellent reception and accommodation of participants.

Similar cables of thanks were received by Prince Muhammad Bin-Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz the governor of the eastern region and Usamah Faqih the minister of commerce.

The symposium was organized by the eastern region chamber of commerce and industry in cooperation with the federation of the GCC chambers of commerce and industry. The recommendations made by the two-day gathering urged the GCC federation of chambers of commerce and industry and member chambers to intensify efforts and heal informatics gaps by publishing booklets and introductory bulletins to spread public awareness. The GCC countries were also urged to review policies and re-consider plans with the aim of giving momentum for industries of relative advantages.

The symposium called for closer cooperation with non-GCC companies and conduction of a perfect and detailed study on the activities of foreign companies upon which an accurate strategy could be charted to harmonize with productive operations and industrial products of the GCC in which such companies could participate.

The GCC concerned departments were advised to review legislations and regulations so as to attract and employ more foreign investments in the framework of the development targets and changes of the world economic situations.

The symposium suggested establishment of an specialized GCC body to oversee the activities of exportation bodies of member states and the proposed body would explore situation of outside markets and make detailed statements on GCC products and ways to support the exports and marketing of GCC items.

The participants invited GCC states to benefit from services being rendered by regional establishments in charge of providing crediting facilities for GCC exports in foreign markets and called for intensive technical cooperation with advanced countries and economic blocs with the aim of developing standards measures on the one hand and widening issuing of international recognized standards and specifications that do not contradict with the GCC standards on the other hand.

The GCC banking establishments were urged to cope with the prevailing situation and set up comprehensive banks with big financial resources, qualified and well-trained human cadres. The symposium also called for expanding and reinforcing cooperation between banks and investment firms and to work for attracting foreign investments and the national money invested abroad.

The participants also called GCC states to pay adequate attention on insurance companies for its big role in development of trade and shipping sectors. They also called for making precaution measures in dealing with commercial investment projects and acceleration of measures for economic integration between the GCC member states. The symposium also emphasized the paramount role that could be undertaken by the GCC private sectors as a major partner in pushing the joint economic action in the region.

Yemen

Yemen: Salih Receives Iraqi Envoy, Message From Saddam

JN0703185096 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Republic, today received 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd- al-Ghafur, Iraqi minister of culture and information, who conveyed to the brother president a message from his brother Iraqi President Saddam Husayn. The message deals with relations between the two brotherly countries and the Iraqi people's suffering as a result of the continued economic embargo. The message also deals with Iraq's position on the current negotiations with the United Nations on Resolution 986 on oil for food. The message deals with a number of issues and developments of interest to the Arab nation. It stresses Iraq's desire and eagerness to do everything possible to restore Arab solidarity.

The brother president asked the Iraqi envoy to convey a reply to his brother President Saddam Husayn. The message deals with a number of issues related to the brotherly relations between the two countries and the Arab nation. He said he hopes that the brothers in Iraq will continue to deal positively deal the UN resolutions to end the suffering of the brotherly Iraqi people and meet their needs for food, medicine, and other humanitarian requirements.

The meeting was attended by brother Yahya Husayn al-'Arashi, minister of culture and tourism, and Iraqi Ambassador Dr. Muhsin Khalil.

Iraq: Source Claims Spare Parts for Agriculture Ministry Helicopters

JN0703204896 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 7 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY today, a responsible Foreign Ministry source stated the following:

We learned through the news media about the statement by the Jordanian Government's official spokesman on 7 March. The Jordanian spokesman said competent Jordanian agencies had seized spare parts for warplanes. These parts were in transit from Poland to Iraq via Queen Alia International Airport. The Jordanian spokesman said these spare parts were not among the materials the UN Security Council has approved for importing to Iraq.

The responsible source from the Iraqi Foreign Ministry added: The spare parts include engines for MI-2 helicopters. The United Nations knows that these helicopters are used for agricultural purposes and belong to the Agriculture Ministry. This is not the first time Iraq has received spare parts for these helicopters with the knowledge and approval of the United Nations. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO, previously obtained approval to equip the Ministry of Agriculture in Baghdad with spare parts for these helicopters. In addition, a number of Polish pilots were asked to fly some of these helicopters to fight pests in northern Iraq.

The responsible Foreign Ministry source asserted that it is known worldwide that this type of helicopter is used for agricultural purposes. Iraq uses these helicopters for agricultural purposes. These helicopters are under the Directorate of Agricultural Aviation, which is part of the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture. The United Nations and the FAO are aware of this.

The responsible Foreign Ministry source added: Our information indicates that the supplier of these spare parts and engines followed the correct procedures and obtained approval to supply these parts for agricultural purposes, as we said in this statement. The use of this equipment for agricultural purposes, which is the truth regarding the helicopters in Iraq, is not banned under the Security Council resolutions. The supply operations are done publicly and with the knowledge of the United Nations.

The official Foreign Ministry spokesman concluded: Lofty and unyielding Iraq will not exploit any party. It is not part of Iraq's policy or ethics to exploit others, particularly the fraternal Jordanian people. The Iraqi people harbor love and amity for the Jordanian people and always open their hearts and extend their hands to them in the spirit of fraternity, sincere cooperation, and a shared destiny.

Iraq: KDP Denies Barzani, 'Any of Party's Leaders' Met Minister

MM0703165096 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Mar 96 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Barzani Denies Meeting With Iraqi Oil Minister"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, AL-HAYAH — The Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP], led by Mas'ud Barzani, has denied that Barzani received Iraqi Oil Minister Major General 'Amir Rashid, who crossed the Kurdish region in north Iraq into Turkey. A spokesman for the party attacked the attempts of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] (led by Jalal Talabani) "to fabricate stories and cast doubt on the party's position."

A KDP spokesman told AL-HAYAH that the party "categorically denies the PUK's allegations that Mas'ud Barzani received Iraqi Oil Minister 'Amir Rashid. Neither Barzani nor any of the party's leaders received or met with the Iraqi minister when he crossed the Zakhu into Turkey." [passage omitted]

Iraq: Kurdish Areas Bombarded; Material Damage Reported

NC0703154996 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An Iraqi regime force comprising six armored cars and two helicopters bombarded Kurdish villages on the Irbil plain. The KURDISTAN NWAY newspaper reported that two days ago, the bestial 'Aflaqite bombardment damaged two civilian cars and caused material damage.

Iraq: Oppositionist Criticizes King Husayn's Meeting With Kurds

NC0703165696 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 3 Mar 96 p 8

[Report from AL-AHRAM office in London]

[FBIS Translated Text] An Iraqi opposition figure in London attacked Jordanian King Husayn's meeting with Kurdish leaders last week. He said it is not in the Kurds' interest that Saddam Husayn be removed from power.

Salah 'Umar al-'Ali, a former Iraqi minister and current leader of the Iraqi National Grouping, told AL-AHRAM in London that the strategy of the Kurds is not to let a central government in Baghdad control Iraq's Kurdistan. Everything happening in Iraq now is serving this strategy, he said. He noted that the Kurds are reiterating that they cannot play a role in changing the regime in Iraq, saying this is the responsibility of the Iraqi Arabs.

Al-'Ali said that if international pressure is applied to the Kurds [to help overthrow the government], then their role will be marginal, given the division in their ranks. He stressed that the Kurds are willing to see the international protection in northern Iraq continue. A democratic regime in Iraq will demand that the Kurdish region return to the central government.

King Husayn, now on a private visit to Britain, met with Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Leader Jalal Talabani and a representative of Kurdistan Democratic Party Leader Mas'ud Barzani. They discussed the situation in Iraq.

Al-'Ali said King Husayn hopes to play a role in the upcoming change in Iraq, but added that Jordan's size and capabilities do not allow it to influence the situation in Iraq. He said Jordan can succeed only if it joins regional and foreign countries in a plan for change in Iraq.

But Ghassan al-'Atiyah, an independent Iraqi oppositionist and director of the Iraqi Studies Center in London, told AL-AHRAM that King Husayn is willing to include the Kurds in a proposed conference for Iraqi opposition factions in Amman. His meeting with Kurdish leaders in London was a good chance for this, he said.

He pointed out that the Kurds are the strongest sympathizers with King Husayn's proposal for a federation in Iraq. He said the king's meeting with the Kurdish leaders might be a message to the Americans, before the king's visit to the United States, that he controls many cards in the game of change in Iraq.

Iraq: Opposition Claims Assassination of MKO Member in Baghdad

LD0803111296 Tehran IRNA in English
1103 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 8, IRNA — An Iraqi opposition group took responsibility for the assassination of a 33-year-old member of the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO), Hamed Reza Rahmani, in Baghdad on Thursday.

An individual indenifying himself as a "Muslim combatant" told 'the National Iraqi News Agency' in Amman that Rahmani was assassinated in retaliation for his special part in the carnage of the Muslim Shiites in the holy city of Karbala', the site of the mausoleum of Imam Husayn (as [peace be upon him]), the third imam of the household of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh [peace be upon him]). The MKO cooperated with the Iraqi forces in suppressing the Muslim Shiites in Karbala' four years ago. The Iraqi Muslim combatants had also claimed responsibility in the past for several assassinations of the terrorist MKO members, warning that they would treat MKO as part of the Iraqi regime's army and intelligence agents.

One of the leaders of the terrorist MKO, following the participation of MKO members in the massacre of Iraqi Muslims in northern and southern Iraq in the wake of the Persian Gulf war, announced that the MKO terrorist members consider themselves honorary forces of the Iraqi Army.

Iraq: Iran Said Planning To Help 'Reactivate' Opposition

MM0703163396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
7 Mar 96 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Iran Makes Contacts To Arrange for Expanded Iraqi Opposition Conference"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, AL-HAYAH — Informed sources have told AL-HAYAH that Mohammad Aqa-Mohammadi, who is in charge of the Iraqi file in the Iranian National Security Council, is making contacts with the Syrians and some Iraqi opposition elements "to reactivate the opposition's efforts" in the light of the talks held between Syrian and Iranian Vice Presidents 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Hasan Habibi last week.

The sources pointed out that the Iranian official "is discussing details of the Syrian-Iranian understanding designed to support efforts to hold an expanded Iraqi opposition conference in Damascus to unite their efforts and forces," while contacts are being made among Iraqi parties to arrange for this meeting. [passage omitted]

Iraq: Saddam Reportedly Considered Resigning

96LH0107A Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic
22 Dec 95 pp 36-37

[Article by Nayil Mukhaybir in London: "The Iraqi President to His Son-in- Law: 'We Are Finished, Husayn!'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Since the end of the Gulf war and the imposition of international sanctions on Iraq it seems that the basic condition the United States has put in place is the toppling or removal of Saddam in return for lifting the blockade imposed on Baghdad. Those who know the motives of U.S. intentions confirm that Washington claims the necessity of applying the UN resolutions while it is in fact asking for no less than the Iraqi president's removal from power.

At the same time, a great uproar arose, and is still rising, over how serious the Americans are to get rid of Saddam Husayn, how genuine their quest to change the regime in Iraq really is, and even how genuine their ability to achieve that is, given the total control of the Iraqi president, and his family and his clan over all power centers and sensitive military and security positions in the country. Those who know the secrets of what is occurring in Iraq assert that there have been several coup attempts against Saddam Husayn since 1991, all of which failed. This has inclined Washington to pursue a plan to tighten the noose around Iraq, to move its people to "the great hoped-for intifadah, or Saddam Husayn's forcible ouster and resignation."

Those who know the nature of the Iraqi regime and the character of Saddam Husayn absolutely rule out his resorting to resignation or turning over power and authority to someone else. But the truth is the exact opposite. AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI has been able to confirm that Saddam Husayn has more than once seriously faced the question of leaving power and resigning.

Sources very close to the regime in Baghdad reveal that family meetings have many times included discussions about Saddam Husayn's resorting to resignation, with his own consent and at his own suggestion, of course.

Perhaps the first time Saddam seriously faced resigning was in the middle of the war to liberate Kuwait. AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI's sources have revealed the details of this question, saying, "The international alliance forces' raids against the Iraqi forces in Kuwait had begun to intensify catastrophically. The aerial bombardment extended, with extreme violence, to the Republican Guards' brigades in Iraq, and the news of the terrible losses reached Saddam, and excited his fear of the possibility of the international forces reaching Baghdad soon, forcing him to make the difficult decision of withdrawing from Kuwait. Everyone close to Saddam knew that he preferred resigning to withdrawing from Kuwait, but few were prepared to face this moment of truth.

On that day, Saddam Husayn surprised the members of his family by summoning them to an urgent emergency meeting. He told them, "We are finished. I cannot face the Iraqis and tell them 'Pull out of Kuwait.' How can I ask the heroic soldiers of Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, when I was the one who told them before, 'If you hear a decision demanding you withdraw from Kuwait, even in my voice, don't withdraw.' I will not ask them to do that. Our position is very difficult. We must find a way of making some arrangements with the Americans for turning power over to someone else."

Apparently at the time the family unanimously rejected the Iraqi president's proposal. They all declared their support for him and their readiness to sacrifice absolutely everything for him. They competed with one another in exchanging expressions of praise for the hero of the "Mother of Battles" and the need to continue the challenge to the world. They pointed out that withdrawal from Kuwait was merely the loss of a battle; the real war must be for Baghdad, with the steadfastness of the brave against enemies.

The Second Resignation

The Gulf war ended with the withdrawal from Kuwait, and Saddam stayed in power. It seems, however, that the Iraqi president's morale received a terrible blow with his defeat in Kuwait; he was seized with fear and apprehension for the future.

Before he could gather his forces and his breath, regain some of his morale, absorb the Kuwait shock, and rethink his considerations, Saddam Husayn contemplated resignation again. That was in the middle of the Shiite uprising in al-Najaf and Karbala', which filled southern Iraq with clear support for the alliance forces, especially the Americans. At the time, Saddam Husayn decided to respond with violence and blood to "the traitors who seek the partition of Iraq." He gave orders for the Republican Guard and the Special Forces to quell the southern uprising by any means, in such a way as to teach everyone a lesson, so that the world understand that "Saddam Husayn was capable of imposing his control throughout all of Iraq." A state of extreme emergency was declared, and Saddam's son-in-law, General Husayn Kamil, headed to the area to direct military operations personally. On the road to Karbala', Husayn Kamil's motorcade was hit by a missile attack in which five of his guards were killed. His car was burned, though, miraculously, he escaped.

Within a few days, the rebels succeeded in gaining control over Karbala' and cutting the roads leading to it. They mounted attacks on the Iraqi forces during which they destroyed a large number of tanks. Meanwhile Husayn Kamil used a helicopter to return quickly to Baghdad and submit a verbal report to Saddam Husayn on the situation and the position. His news confirmed that the uprising had reached the region of al-Masib, no more than 40 kilometers from the Iraqi capital. The weather outside the Republican Palace was stormy at the time, and the atmosphere was also stormy inside, where Saddam met with his son-in-law in the presence of Qusayy and Saddam Kamil. No sooner had Husayn Kamil begun to relate the details of what had happened, and told the Iraqi president the truth of what was happening on the ground in the south, than Saddam told him, sorrow and anxiety visible on his face, "We are finished, Husayn."

Husayn Kamil was surprised by this remark of Saddam's, and asked him, "Sir, what are you saying?" Saddam answered, "We must now think of giving up power. We must think of a way of handing power over to people who may be able to save the situation. We are finished."

The sources citing this conversation add that Saddam Husayn saw what was happening in the south as extremely grave, due to his conviction that the Americans and even the Iranians were behind these events. He never imagined for a moment that the Iraqis were capable of starting these battles themselves. Husayn Kamil tried to calm Saddam Husayn's fright, and to convince him that his resignation would be an even greater disaster. "Sir," he told him, "We must not give up hope. From this point on, I believe I am capable of dealing with what is happening, turning the tide, and saving the situation. We must at least try. Let me try."

Husayn Kamil did indeed return to Karbala with exception powers. He used all types of weapons, and succeeding in quelling the uprising of the south with fire and blood. The result was that Saddam recovered his morale and withdrew his resignation.

This information, now revealed for the first time, comes for the first time from quarters of unimpeachable veracity, in view of their proximity to the events and their having lived through those difficult hours in the stronghold of Iraqi power.

Here new questions arise regarding the information, which spoke at various times of Saddam's thoughts of applying for political asylum in this or that country. Everyone recalls how the possibility of Saddam Husayn's asylum in Algeria came up during that period. President Husni Mubarak also proclaimed, more than once, his readiness to offer political asylum to Saddam Husayn. Sources familiar with the fickleness of Saddam Husayn's character also confirm that the Iraqi president actually faced the question of resignation, or seeking asylum in some other country, on more than one occasion, but the same sources explain that the times in which Saddam Husayn seriously contemplated resigning were those of grave military danger; that is, every time he found himself on the brink of a shameful or certain military defeat. It seems that U.S. security agencies have taken into account a clear analysis of the parameters of the "zero point" at which Saddam would give up power. Those aware of the secrets of what is happening today in Iraq, and in Iraqi affairs since Husayn Kamil's exodus, say it is part of a plan to eliminate Saddam Husayn by rattling his self-confidence and his confidence in his family and regime, until the time comes when he says to the family left around him, "We are finished. We must hand over power to others."

Israel: Savir—Peres Not Posing Conditions for Resuming Syria Talks

TA0703202296 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 7 Mar 96

[Political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There is no doubt that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has changed his policy and stopped the peace process. Uri Savir, coordinator of the political negotiations, told our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen today that the Palestinians and Syrians have received this policy with understanding, although our correspondent believes that the freeze in the process will not last long:

[Begin recording] [Rosen] A day after the prime minister said that the negotiations with Syria will not resume under the current circumstances, the U.S. ambassador in Israel arrived at the office of Uri Savir, head of the delegation to these talks, and their topic of conversation is easy to guess.

[Savir] We did not say we were posing any conditions. We said that the Syrians must adopt certain positions that will aid the very existence of the peace process.

[Rosen] As long as this does not happen, will the negotiations with the Syrians not resume?

[Savir] Let Syria first draw conclusions regarding the new situation which has been created. I think Syria should define its attitude toward violence and terror in general.

[Rosen] Thus, the Wye Plantation talks are suspended. Today, Peres' office is trying to lessen the impression that the prime minister was making their resumption conditional on the removal of the terrorist commands from Damascus. What cannot be denied is that the prime minister, in halting the talks, in fact accepted the demands posed by the opposition and the president.

[Savir] Following the attack in Tel Aviv, the delegation — almost of its own accord — decided to return. It is an enormous anachronism, as well as emotional and intellectual anathema, to continue peace talks when the blood of our friends and their children is being spilled here.

[Rosen] When blood was spilled in the past, Shim'on Peres said we should continue the negotiations as if terror does not exist and fight terror as if negotiations do not exist. Things have changed now. The Oslo accord allows the Palestinians to change the Palestinian Charter by 7 May. As of this week, and contrary to the accord, Peres is demanding that they do so at once; otherwise, Hebron will not be evacuated by the end of the month.

[Savir] Something has happened. These attacks are very grave.

[Rosen] In other words, you are admitting that, at this stage, Israel is going to make a move which runs counter to the letter of the agreement with the Palestinians.

[Savir] The other side has to abide by its commitments as stipulated in the agreement. It takes time, because this is a very hard fight for the Palestinian Authority [PA].

[Rosen] Doesn't it seem to you that this move is a surrender to public opinion and to the opposition's demands?

[Savir] The PA has not come up with any complaints at the moment. It understands. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Israel: International Antiterror Summit To Convene in Taba 13 Mar

TA0703192396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] It was learned this evening that an international summit on the war against terror will take place in Taba on 13 March under President Clinton's leadership. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that in the course of his short visit to the region, President Clinton will also visit Jerusalem. The idea of the conference was raised by Shim'on Peres, and the leaders of about 20 countries, including EU countries, Russia, Persian Gulf countries, and North African countries, have been invited, in addition to the leaders of Egypt and Jordan, Mubarak and Husayn, whose attendance is guaranteed. Yasir 'Arafat will also participate. Our correspondent adds that representatives of the Israeli opposition will also be invited to the conference.

Israel: Beilin on Antiterror Conference, PA Steps Against Terrorism

TA0803064596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Gaza, PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat yesterday issued a call for an international conference on terror.

Cabinet Minister Yosi Beilin, speaking to reporters in Jerusalem, thought a united front could contribute to the battle against terror.

[Begin Beilin recording] If we can form a front against violence, against terrorism in this part of the world, that would be very, very important. One has to take into consideration that there were some inhibitions in the past to work together on such things. And if because of what happened, people understand that they must work together because if we work separately it is much more difficult. What we have to do is to coordinate our efforts against the terrorists. And if we do that — and even if the result of such a conference, or a committee, or any kind of framework which will enable us to work together — my own view, I mean it is not an official view of the government — is that it may contribute much. [end recording]

[Later on in the same newscast, Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English reports that "on Palestinian efforts to crack down on terrorists operating in the self-rule areas, cabinet minister Beilin said there were signs that Yasir 'Arafat was taking steps." In a recorded passage, Beilin says: "There are some signs that something happened on the side of the Palestinian Authority [PA]. They understand now that there is a threat. That what we have to do is to join efforts and to work together in order to prevent a situation whereby it would be very, very difficult to say the least to continue the process. And that is why I think that today what is happening — what has happened in the last days — is something different. They are working against the basis of the Islamic Jihad. They are entering the mosques. They are entering the clubs of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. They are arresting people. They are replacing people in some of these clubs. And I think that they understand that they are actually acting against their own opposition. It is not that they are doing any favors to the Israelis. They are fighting against a violent opposition, which true is acting against Israelis, but politically it is jeopardizing their status in the territories and that is why I believe that there is a hope that there is a significant change in the policy of the PA vis-a-vis Hamas today."]

Israel: Peres Urges Kinkel To Take 'Firm' Steps Against Iran

TA0703195296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel rushed to Israel today on a previously unscheduled visit in view of the wave of terror. He met with the prime minister this evening and expressed the German public's solidarity with the Israeli people. He added that Germany and the EU countries will examine any means at their disposal to make it clear to 'Arafat that he should be firmer in his handling of the terrorists and their leaders in the autonomy areas. The prime minister urged Kinkel and the German Government to adopt firm measures against Iran, which stands behind the Islamic terror, and to properly relay Europe's stance to 'Arafat.

The German foreign minister left for Gaza this evening to meet with 'Arafat. Tomorrow he will meet with his counterpart, Ehud Baraq, and will also visit the victims of the Dizengoff attack at Ichilov Hospital.

Israel: Kinkel in Israel To Express Solidarity on Terrorist Attacks

LD0703172396 Berlin ARD/ZDF Videotext in German 1616 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel has arrived for a brief visit in Israel. In Jerusalem he will be meeting with Prime Minister Peres this evening.

The German Foreign Ministry said that Kinkel's intention is to express the solidarity of the Germans with the Israeli people in the wake of the terrorist attacks by the fundamentalist Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] movement.

A talk between Kinkel and PLO leader 'Arafat is planned in Gaza for this evening. Kinkel would urge that everything is being done to stop the attacks, it was said.

Israel: CIA Deputy Director To Visit on Counterterror Cooperation

TA0803092696 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 8 Mar 96 p A6

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] Two U.S. teams will leave for Israel today for political and professional talks on cooperation against radical Islamic terror. One team will be headed by CIA Deputy Director George Tenet and include representatives from the various branches of the U.S. intelligence community. They will hold consultations with Israeli intelligence officials and examine proposals for professional cooperation.

Tenet, who became the CIA deputy director eight months ago, was previously a White House adviser on intelligence affairs in the framework of the National Security Council.

The second delegation will address the political aspects of counterterrorism activities and the preparations for the Middle East summit on counterterrorism due to convene next Wednesday [13 March]. The delegation will be headed by Philip Wilcox, head of the State Department's counterterrorism desk, and formerly the head of the Israel Department.

The United States is currently debating the question of the financing of the explosive-detecting equipment presented as a gift to Israel on U.S. President Bill Clinton's instructions. Under the law, the equipment may be transferred from U.S. stock, but its financing requires a special budget allocation.

Last year Israel solicited special U.S. financial of $150 million for its war against terror, in addition to the annual defense aid, but action on the the request was delayed. The Israeli Embassy in Washington counseled Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq to temporarily finance the equipment transfer by a "loan" from the military aid, while concurrently initiating special congressional legislation that will allow additional special aid for counterterrorism efforts.

It transpired in internal discussions over recent months in an attempt to find a budget for the purchase of the explosive-detecting systems, that the Israeli agent of Thermedics Detection, the American manufacturer of the detectors, had two systems in stock in Israel, but government bodies lacked the necessary funds for the purchase.

Israel: U.S. Antiterror Equipment Dubbed 'Public Relations Stunt'

TA0703134296 Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew 7 Mar 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Patriot B"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The enthusiastic reception at Ben-Gurion Airport for the U.S. Air Force plane carrying explosive-detection equipment proves this is more of a spectacular public relations stunt than a real response to the problem of terror.

There is nothing about these sophisticated explosive detectors that we did not know before. Their value is limited to the places where they are installed, and they give no solution to the problem of thousands of buses and public places, such as markets, malls, and mass gatherings. Therefore, raising exaggerated expectations makes no sense at all. We still recall the expectations created in the midst of the Gulf war, when the Americans sent us the Patriots, whose contribution was actually nil.

The U.S. Administration apparently wants to raise the Israeli Government's morale and to appear to attach importance to the questions that came up in the wake of the murderous terrorist attacks, but we should beware not to foster illusions about bogus solutions.

The antiterror measures approved by the cabinet on Sunday include quite a few components which military experts believe have no practical significance. Retired generals, such as former Intelligence chief Uri Sagi, harshly criticized the establishment of the Supreme Counterterror Command. There is nothing new about this body and, if there is, it is an admission of failure on the part of the body that has dealt with terror to date.

There is a certain common denominator between the establishment of the Supreme Counterterror Command and the reception held for the explosive-detection equipment received from the United States: Both reek of propaganda and an artificial injection of morale.

What is needed is a real war on terror: to strike at its organizers, planners, perpetrators, and spiritual leadership and to force the Palestinian Authority to fulfill its obligations. Salvation will not come from public relations stunts.

Israel: Peres Says Iran More Dangerous Than Nazism

LD0703230796 Paris France-2 Television Network in French 1920 GMT 7 Mar 96

[Interview with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by Alain Duhamel and Jean-Luc Mano in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on 7 March—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Mano] Prime minister, good evening. Thank you for meeting us at this difficult time for Israel and for the peace process. How do you feel? Are you the fighting chief of a country at war right now?

[Peres] Good evening. I think that peace will eventually prevail but first we must go through very difficult times, through a difficult corridor. As I am a man who works and fights for peace, I have the responsibility of taking all the necessary measures to guarantee security in the whole of the country and for all Israelis.

[Duhamel] When one arrives in Jerusalem, the first thing one notices is that mourning and grief are in the air. Let us watch these few pictures. [passage omitted]

[Peres] These were two extremely difficult weeks for everyone. It was really a horrific attack against totally innocent people. There was no reason, no explanation for this, no clear target. In spite of this, I think the people of Israel are strong enough to survive these difficult times.

[Mano] Are you able today to ensure security in this country? What measures have you taken and what measures will you take?

[Peres] To fight terrorism it is necessary to take a very large and varied array of measures. One can start with the funds for terrorist organizations and continue with the masterminds of terror. We must introduce an extraordinary state of security and defense. At the same time, we must respect the law. This must all take place under the rule of law.

[Duhamel] Your predecessor, Yitzhaq Rabin, was murdered. There have been several attacks in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. What is going on with the famous Israeli security services?

[Peres] One cannot ask for perfection, one cannot demand total protection, that's impossible. In the United States, as well as in France, in Paris, all over the world, people at times try to carry our terrorist attacks in spite of all the measures taken. I still have trust in our security organizations, both public and secret, and I am sure that we will win this battle like we won all the others.

[Mano] I will ask you to watch these pictures shot in Gaza [passage omitted] Part of the problem lies with Mr. 'Arafat. Do you think that he is doing what he should?

[Peres] He is trying, but not enough. I think that his analysis of the situation was wrong. He thought he could reach an agreement with Hamas but nothing happened. What I think he does not understand is that this attack is not only against us but also against himself. What we are asking from 'Arafat is not for him to become a defender or a servant of Israel, not at all. Our only request is for Mr. 'Arafat to do in Gaza what Mr. Mubarak did in Cairo or King Husayn did in Amman: that is to allow only one armed authority, not two or three.

[Duhamel] Does he behave like someone who has power and authority over the Palestinians?

[Peres] Who, 'Arafat?

[Duhamel] Yes.

[Peres] Yes, he is the only one for the time being. His problem is to transform a coalition of exiles into a responsible authority on the ground. Two completely different kinds of discipline are required.

[Mano] Do you trust Mr. 'Arafat right now?

[Peres] Well, I trust him as the Palestinians' representative. There is nobody else for the time being, or maybe even in the future. I approved some of the measures he took but I do not think he did enough.

[Duhamel] Do the Palestinian people want peace?

[Peres] If you asked me this question three or four years ago I would not have been sure. At that time I thought that a majority of Palestinians were not sure whether they preferred peace. Today I think that there is maybe a majority of people who favor peace, even among the Arabs. This is a big psychological change. However, an armed minority is still against peace. They are ready to [words indistinct], not only in Israel.

[Mono] There are also Israelis who are against peace. Do the Israelis still believe in peace?

[Peres] I think the Israelis seek peace but it's true that not everyone is ready to pay the price for peace. The problem is never whether one is in favor of peace but whether one is ready to pay the necessary price to get peace. This is something else. Some think that peace comes for free but that is not true.

[Duhamel] The Israeli and the Palestinian police work together, even the secret services work together. What could 'Arafat concretely do more than he is already doing as far as security is concerned?

[Peres] One should make a distinction between the work done by the Palestinian police in the West Bank and the work done by the Palestinian police in Gaza. There is a big difference between the two. In the West Bank they are more efficient, in Gaza things are more complicated. The police and the terrorists in Gaza are in the same schools and in the same houses.

[Mono] Why did you not use more force in the West Bank, as some are demanding here?

[Peres] I respected the Israeli laws and international agreements, including the one between us and the Palestinians. I hope that the Palestinians themselves will carry out their duties under that agreement.

[Mono] Mr. 'Arafat called for an international conference against terrorism at the first session of the Palestinian parliament this morning. Do you think this is a serious proposal and that you may attend the conference?

[Peres] If he proves that he can control the situation at home, the international conference could be successful.

[Duhamel] Your main priority right now is obviously Israel's security. Does this mean that the peace process will be stuck for a long time?

[Peres] For the time being the main priority is security, as you said. However, I have not set aside our main policies, the ones which will shape our future. As you know, we are at the end of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is my feeling. It is like making the last step of a very long march and discovering that the last stretch of road is a minefield. However, one cannot forget the main historical line.

[Mono] Will the timetable be changed? The town of Hebron was scheduled to be returned at the end of the month. Has that move been frozen, or cancelled?

[Peres] On Hebron, I can say that I am waiting for the amendments to the Palestinian Charter before redeploying our troops out of Hebron.

[Mono] You were speaking earlier of regional threats. Have you any proof that Iran was behind the attacks?

[Peres] Without the slightest doubt. There is not the slightest doubt that the Iranians control the activities of Hizballah in Lebanon. The money, the training, the leadership, the orders, they all come from Tehran. As does the financing of both Islamic Jihad and Hamas.

When I spoke of threats, the threat is Iranian-led fundamentalism.

[Duhamel] What attitude should the West adopt toward Iran?

[Peres] The West must really stop flirting with the Iranians. It is incredible. They call this flirting critical dialogue. What criticism? What dialogue? Iran is currently the center of terrorism, the center of fundamentalism, the center of subversion, and, you know, in my opinion it is more dangerous than Nazism.

[Duhamel] All the....

[Peres, interrupting] One moment — because Hitler did not have a nuclear bomb. The Iranians have tested and achieved a nuclear option. Frankly, I fail to understand how any European country can be willing to excuse, to close its eyes to such a central and immediate threat.

[Duhamel] Do you have a specific European country in mind?

[Peres] Germany, if you like, for example. And there are others.

[Mono] Do you find that, on the other hand, France has adopted a correct stance?

[Peres] In France, too, there are companies looking to do business with the Iranians.

[Duhamel] You recently published a book entitled The Fight for Peace. What title would you give the present chapter?

[Peres] The same. The fight continues and peace remains the true goal.

[Mono] We are going to show you some pictures — not very pleasant for you — of demonstrators demanding your departure. [Interview continues over video clip]. Have you the political strength to continue the fight of which you have been speaking?

[Peres] That is hard to say, but I believe I have the political mettle to face such demonstrations. It is not easy, but they were not condemning me because I committed a crime but because I stand for peace and because I speak the truth. I am not afraid to tell the truth: That is my duty. For this I demand no recognition, no award, because I believe that peace is the best option for us, for the Arabs, for the future, for the young. It is my duty to say so and act accordingly.

[Mono] Our program is coming to an end and there is a question we want to ask you because many people are posing it: In the light of Mr. Rabin's assassination, do you fear for your life?

[Peres] No. My condition is that of any soldier in our army.

[Mono] So the fight goes on, will go on?

[Peres] Yes, yes, unremittingly and with no fear.

[Mono] Thank you. Thank you very much. Good evening.

[Peres] Good evening.

Israel: Baraq—'Arafat Has 'Last Chance' To Dismantle Terror Groups

TA0803081796 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq says that Israel is giving 'Arafat a last chance to dismantle the terrorist organizations inside the autonomous areas. If 'Arafat fails to do the job, Israel will dismantle these groups, Baraq said, noting that such a development could have far-reaching ramifications. Our correspondent in Haifa Qobi Mandel reports:

[Begin recording] [Mandel] Last night, Foreign Minister Baraq enumerated the steps taken by Israel in its battle against terrorism: both operational and intelligence activities accompanied by pressure on the chairman of the Palestinian Authority [PA], which, Baraq explained, was 'Arafat's last chance as far as Israel was concerned.

[Baraq] We are offering a last chance which is relatively limited by time and not of unlimited duration. 'Arafat must dismantle these organizations, place their members under arrest, and disarm them. If he fails to do so, we will. We will come down on them like a steamroller. Our actions will neither leave Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] indifferent nor shore up 'Arafat's stability. I hope he understands. If he does not, the price will be that we will start operating inside the areas under his control as well. Such a development could have far-reaching consequences.

[Mandel] The foreign minister, who met with the members of the Labor party's Haifa regional council yesterday evening, stressed that the closure on the territories would continue as long as necessary. Baraq said that the peace talks had to be suspended during such a period of bloodshed.

[Baraq] We must suspend our striving for peace for the time being. It is impossible to hold talks with either the Palestinians or the Syrians while blood is being spilled on the streets. As long as this is the situation, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] cannot withdraw from Hebron, or start the talks on further redeployment as scheduled. There must be a radical change.

[Mandel] As for the political dimension, Baraq warned that the Likud's opposition to the idea of separation between Israel and the territories would ultimately lead to a Bosnia-type situation.

[Baraq] When enough time has elapsed after the terrorist attacks, our tempers will cool and our minds will clear. We will then be able to explain this issue to the public which ultimately has enough common sense. The public understands that those who are pushing us toward a Belfast, Beirut, or Bosnia-type situation should not receive their mandate. The bunch of people who led us into Lebanon, headed by a decent but inexperienced fellow, should not be permitted to lead the country through some of its most difficult junctures. One must not surrender to the illusion that if these people had been in power, every problem would have been resolved. [end recording]

Israel: EU Changes Policy, To 'Stay Clear' of Orient House

TA0703171096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The EU has changed its stand regarding Orient House and meetings there between Palestinians and visiting foreign officials. The decision comes as the foreign ministers of France and Germany visit Israel. More on the Orient House controversy from Sara Manobla:

[Begin recording] [Manobla] At the embassy of the European Commission in Tel Aviv, officials were careful to point out that no formal decision had been taken on this sensitive point. However, the spokesman did confirm an earlier report from Qol Yisra'el's diplomatic correspondent that visiting European diplomats would in future refrain from meeting Palestinians at Orient House in Jerusalem. No formal declaration has been made, but a general consensus had been reached, said the spokesman. For the duration of the election campaign in Israel, officials of the EU will stay clear of Orient House and meet Palestinians at alternative venues so as not to be involved in the internal political debate of the country. The recommendation was made by the forum of representatives of the 15 states of the EU. This move is in sharp contrast to previous EU policy, whereby officials visiting Jerusalem would meet Palestinians at Orient House despite Israel's objections. The meetings at Orient House have been a constant source of annoyance to Israel. [passage omitted]

Today, however, Palestinian leader Faysal al-Husayni confirmed the Palestinian stand regarding Orient House.

[Al-Husayni] The Orient House is here for a certain job — to continue pushing forward the peace process, to defend the peace process — and we will continue doing the same job. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Israel: Shahal on War Against Terrorism, Arrest of Israeli Arab

TA0803114796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal said that next week the Israel Police will host a representative of the U.S. Administration and brief the visiting official on the police force's needs and requirements for the war against terrorism.

Minister Shahal also expressed the hope that the Palestinian Police would locate the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] fugitives appearing on the list handed to the Palestinians by the Shin Bet. The minister noted that cooperation with the Palestinians in Judaea and Samaria was quite good.

Shahal said that the interrogation of Sa'id Husayn Sulaymani from the Yizre'el Valley village of Manshiyah-Zabda, who drove the suicide bomber to Dizengoff, is continuing; however, there is no intention of arresting additional suspects.

Our correspondent Aviv Bushinsky reports that the public security minister said that the closure on the territories would remain in force for the time being.

Israel: Court Reveals Name of Israeli Arab Driver of Hamas Bomber

TA0803110096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Tiberias court has permitted the publication of the name of the truck driver who drove the suicide terrorist from the Gaza Strip to Dizengoff Center. The man is Sa'id Husayn Sulaymani from the village of Manshiya-Zabda, which is located in the eastern part of the Yizre'el Valley. Our correspondent Ilan Ro'e reports that the 45-year-old Sulaymani has been under arrest since 4 March. The court has extended his remand until 20 March. Our correspondent adds that army forces have deployed in Manshiya-Zabda to maintain the peace.

Israel: Duvdevan Unit Captures 5 Fugitives Linked to Suicide Attacks

TA0803064096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The commander of the Israeli army's Duvdevan undercover unit says his men have captured five wanted Palestinians in Judaea and Samaria over recent days. The five are tied to the recent suicide attacks.

In an interview with Qol Yisra'el, the commander said his unit is operating along the Green Line between Israel and the territories, with the assistance of helicopters, in addition to its activities within Judaea and Samaria.

Israel: Shahal—PA Given Identity of Attack Planner; Arrest Awaited

TA0703164896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel has given Palestinian Authority [PA] President Yasir 'Arafat the name and location of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] man believed to have planned the suicide bombing attacks in the last two weeks. This was revealed in the Knesset today by Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal, who said Israel is now waiting for his arrest.

The PA is understood to have arrested only five out of the 13 fugitives on the list Israel handed to 'Arafat. Two of the five had been arrested before, sentenced to long prison terms, and been released. The list was given to 'Arafat by Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahaq after the first suicide attacks in Jerusalem and Ashqelon.

Israel: Police Close Hamas Jerusalem Office, Confiscate Equipment

TA0703124696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Conference of Sciences and Islamic Education office in north Jerusalem was served with a closure and partial confiscation order at midday today. The office is located near the al-Ram checkpoint and has been used as an activity base by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. The order was signed by the police commissioner and it will apply for two weeks, after which the police will ask the district court to extend it by anther year.

Our correspondent Aviv Bushinsky reports that the policemen did not encounter any resistance when they came to confiscate the office equipment.

Israel: Navy Fears Hamas Fugitives May Flee to Egypt by Sea

TA0803101096 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has decided to step up maritime security along the Gaza Strip coastline out of concern that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] fugitives may attempt to flee to Egypt by sea. A senior Israel Navy officer told IDF Radio that in the course of the past year, a number of fugitives have escaped to Egypt by sea, including prime fugitive Yasir Abu-Samahdanah. Our army affairs correspondent Avi Lifshitz reports:

[Begin Lifshitz recording] Israel Navy officers explain that the method is very simple. The Palestinians take a cheap boat, install a powerful engine and a GPS satellite navigation system which can be purchased in Israel. They then load and smuggle out their cargo. A senior Israel Navy officer said that with the use of such makeshift vessels, the Palestinians have managed to move out a number of fugitives from the Gaza Strip to Egypt over the past year, as well as to smuggle large quantities of materiel into the Gaza Strip. The fugitives which fled were all wanted for the murder of Jews or Arabs who collaborated with Israel. Yasir Abu-Samahdanah is one of the most notorious names on the list. He is the terrorist who was filmed by foreign television networks murdering Palestinians suspected of cooperating with the Shin Bet and the IDF at close range. The navy now fears an upsurge in maritime smuggling activities both to and from the Gaza Strip. The senior officer said that as the closure imposed on the territories by land following the recent terrorist attacks tightens, the Palestinians have greater incentive to smuggle things by sea. Meanwhile, while raising its maritime alert level along the Gaza coastline, the Israel Navy continues to cooperate with the Palestinian Coast Guard. The latter is a small and poorly equipped force made up of several rubber and fiberglass dinghies. The Israel Navy says that Palestinian attempts to thwart smuggling are ineffective. It is preferable, the officers said, for the Israeli Navy to increase its alert level and count on its Dabur patrol boats to do the job. [end recording]

Israel: Gallup Poll Says Peres Leads Premiership Race by 6 Points

TA0803101596 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 8 Mar 96 p 1

[Gallup poll; all findings cited in percentages]

[FBIS Translated Text] Question: If the premiership elections were held today, who would get your vote?

Answers: Peres — 46; Netanyahu — 40; undecided — 14 percent.

Question: If the Knesset elections were held today, which party would you vote for?

Answers (in Knesset seats): Labor — 44 (44 in the current Knesset); Likud-Tzomet-Gesher — 41 (40); Meretz — 5 (12); SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] — 4 (6); Moledet — 2 (3); United Torah Jewry — 4 (4); National Religious Party — 5 (6); Arabs — 5 (5); The Third Way — 2; immigrant party — 3; undecided/other — 5.

Question: Do you support the peace process?

Answers: Support — 64; oppose — 30; do not know — 6.

[A report by Hemi Shalev on page 12 of MA'ARIV's LESHABAT supplement cites additional questions in the Gallup poll:

[Question: What is, in your view, the desirable political solution for the new situation?

[Answers: A national unity government should be established — 24; the government should continue to operate alone — 25; an inner cabinet on counterterror affairs only should be established with the inclusion of Likud and Tzomet — 43; do not know — 7.

[Question: Should the elections be held at the end of May as scheduled?

[Answers: Should be held on time — 66; should be postponed — 26; do not know — 8.

[Question: Following the terror attacks this week, the government decided to establish a counterterror command that will act to eliminate terrorists at any time, anywhere, including Palestinian Authority areas. What is your view of this reaction?

[Answers: It is strong and appropriate — 48; it is feeble and inappropriate — 41 percent; do not know — 11 percent.]

The poll was conducted last night among 564 persons eligible to vote. The third question was posed to the adult Jewish population. The margin of error is approximately 4 percent.

Israel: Post-Terror Poll Puts Netanyahu in Lead for Premiership

TA0803101496 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 8 Mar 96

["YEDI'OT AHARONOT public opinion poll conducted by the Dahaf Institute under the management of Dr. Mina Tzemah"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Question: If elections for prime minister were held today and Shim'on Peres and Binyamin Netanyahu were the candidates, for whom would you vote? (The percentages in parentheses are the findings of the last poll before the bombings in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv)

Answer: Netanyahu — 49 percent (44); Peres — 46 percent (53); undecided/did not reply — 5 percent (3).

Question: If the Knesset elections were held today, which list would get your vote?

List	Seats forecast	Seats forecast before bombings	Seats in current Knesset
Labor	43	45	44
Likud, Tzomet, Gesher	43	37-38	40
Meretz	5	7	12
Moledet	2	1-2	3
NRP	5	6	6
Torah Jewry	4	4	4
SHAS	4	4	6
HADASH, ADP, al-Tibi	7	7	5
The Third Way	3	4	—
Yisra'el Ba'aliya	4	4	—
Total	120	120	120

[Key to abbreviations: NRP — National Religious Party; SHAS — Torah Observing Sephardim; HADASH — Democratic Front for Peace and Equality; ADP — Arab Democratic Party]

Question: Should a national emergency government be established?

Answer: Yes: 46 percent; no: 51 percent; no answer: 3 percent.

The poll was conducted on 5 and 6 March among 504 interviewees constituting a representative sample of the entire adult population in Israel. The margin of error is 4 percent.

Israel: Netanyahu Welcomes Clinton Visit, Regrets Peres' Remarks

TA0703210196 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 7 Mar 96

[Interview with Israel's Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu by Hayim Yavin in the studio — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Yavin] Let us begin with the fresh news about President Clinton's visit to the region. There is no doubt that you welcome the U.S. President, who is coming here for a special conference on the war against terror. Nonetheless, a senior Likud member said a few minutes ago: This is a little too close to election time.

[Netanyahu] First, I welcome him anytime he comes to Israel, definitely for an international conference on fighting terror. I used to organize such conferences myself, and I think it is important for both opposition and government representatives to participate in the conference in order to convey our unity in the fight against terror — a spirit of unity which was not expressed in the remarks made by Minister Liba'i and others, who repeated the tones....

[Yavin, interrupting] Do you share the view that this is a little too close to the date of the Israeli elections?

[Netanyahu] Look, President Clinton can come whenever he wants, and we will welcome him. [passage omitted]

[Yavin] Let us touch on the Abu-Wardah interview yesterday. What is your reaction to what is happening? You made a relatively low-key comment today. The Likud's Beni Begin spoke with great fury yesterday about Peres' reaction to this interview, while you preferred to keep your cool today.

[Netanyahu] I understand his rage. I was also furious, because this was a transparent and rather unwelcome exercise by Jibril al-Rujub and 'Arafat in an attempt to sow dissension among the Israeli people, and I greatly regretted that the prime minister slipped here and took part in the exercise. I am sure that the prime minister, too, regrets this today. I hope such a thing will not be repeated, because it is inappropriate. We will have to coexist both during and after the elections. We are a single nation. We cannot afford to fall into such traps.

[Yavin] Knesset Member Netanyahu, is the era of restraint over?

[Netanyahu] Why?

[Yavin] Yesterday, you — the Likud — issued a very harsh announcement which spoke of vile cooperation between Peres and 'Arafat in an attempt to influence the outcome of the elections in Israel. The Likud announcement says: It is a disgrace that a prime minister should cooperate with 'Arafat in a contemptible provocation, a contemptible policy, which led to disasters. This is what you are saying about the prime minister.

[Netanyahu] Let me tell you, this is not one of Peres' best days, and I hope such things will not recur. There are attempts at provocations. Earlier in the news, you mentioned reports that Iran is interested, as it were, in the Likud's victory. This is nonsense. Like Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Iran is interested in the liquidation of the State of Israel no matter who heads it, just as the terrorists could not care less whether it is Labor or Likud people who get hurt in attacks. For them, we are all one big target. We find ourselves in a difficult election campaign which needs to address critical matters regarding the essence and existence of the state, but we should remember that we must not allow Israel's enemies to break us and cause internal rifts that exceed the legitimate debate which should take place in the election campaign.

[Yavin] After Israel's enemy said what he said on television yesterday, are you saying it is the prime minister's policy that brought about the disaster?

[Netanyahu] I do not think that Mr. Peres is personally responsible for these attacks. That is absurd. I am also sure that he had good intentions when he embarked on his peace policy. I have no doubt about this. Nonetheless, after three years, we can see that Labor's basic concept about relying on 'Arafat for our security did not work. [passage omitted]

Israel: Liba'i Confirms Islamic Decision To Thwart Peres Reelection

TA0703194496 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Justice Minister David Liba'i said today that intelligence elements had previously briefed the inner cabinet on the intentions of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] as presented in the interview with Abu-Wardah.

[Begin Liba'i recording] In his interview yesterday, the prime minister said he was not surprised by Abu-Wardah's remarks, and I understand why he said this. It is because in secret deliberations, we heard information from authoritative intelligence elements about a joint decision made a short while ago by Iran and Hizballah's council, which is also affiliated with other fundamentalist Islamic elements, to intervene in order to prevent the current government in Israel from being reelected. [end recording]

Israel: Rabin's Killer Court Testimony Detailed

TA0803113996 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 8 Mar 96 p 22

[Report by Raine Marcus]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yig'al 'Amir completed his testimony in Tel Aviv District Court yesterday, declaring that he had indeed intended to kill Rabin, justifying his actions, and arguing with the judge.

"If the legal system would have operated correctly over these past three years, there would have been no need to kill Rabin," 'Amir said.

"Shut up — you have such a nerve!" Judge Edmond Levi shouted.

'Amir laughed and Levi found it difficult to contain his anger.

"I don't understand what this Jew finds so amusing," Levi said. "A live human being has gone on to the next world. And you call yourself religious."

"A whole nation is going to the next world," 'Amir retorted. Thousands are being murdered here daily because of this government's policy."

When asked if she had further questions, District Attorney representative Pnina Gay replied that the cross-examination had ended in order to keep the peace.

'Amir said he had waited for a sign from God to kill the late prime minister Yitzhaq Rabin.

"If police would have moved me on from the parking lot I would have taken that as a sign, too, and would have waited for another opportunity," he told the court. "I waited in the parking lot for 40 minutes."

During his second day of testimony, he also said that he had intended to shoot Rabin in the head but was unable to do so since the late prime minister was flanked by guards. Therefore, he was forced to aim at Rabin's back.

Yesterday's testimony may have put an end to intended defense arguments by 'Amir's lawyers, Shmu'el Fleishman and Gabi Shahar, that he did not mean to kill Rabin, but merely paralyze him in order to end the peace process.

When asked by Gay why he did not shoot then-foreign minister Shim'on Peres, who went down the stairs before Rabin at the end of the Tel Aviv peace rally last November 4, 'Amir replied, "Peres did not deserve the honor I reserved for Rabin."

"When he (Peres) went down the stairs, I thought how easy it would be to kill him," 'Amir added. But he decided to kill Rabin first and then, if the opportunity arose, to kill Peres.

'Amir also described the emotional and "mystical" drive which he said urged him to kill Rabin.

"My emotions have been drained these past three years," he said. "It's like a mother who sees that someone wants to kill her children and thus shoots without sentiment or feeling."

He also denied that he is "psychopathic or apathetic," saying he was "simply someone who cares."

"Today everyone is talking about Yig'al 'Amir," he added. "Let's see if in another three years everyone doesn't end up as bars of soap. In another few years, everyone will thank me for what I did."

"I don't mind sitting in jail for the sake of our country," he added.

On Sunday [10 March] the trial will resume, with lawyers summoning defense witnesses. The defense lawyers are still waiting for a court decision on whether they can summon independent psychologists who may prove "diminished responsibility" despite a report by court appointed psychiatrists ruling that 'Amir is sane.

Jordan: Government 'Likely' To Seek IAF Help To Stop Hamas Activity

JN0703153796 Amman THE STAR in English 7-13 Mar 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman (STAR) — The wave of suicide bombings in Israel, which was carried by the military wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), is putting pressure on Jordan to end all links with the movement. Two leading Hamas figures, Ibrahim Ghawshah and Muhammad Nazzal, are Jordanian citizens representing the movement's interests in the Kingdom. In spite of official condemnation of these attacks, Jordan is expected to do more. The US administration requested all countries to close offices and interests of Hamas. This includes Jordan, where Hamas is believed to have a strong political base.

"Those persons who belong to Hamas in Jordan are Jordanian citizens, and they are subject to the Jordanian law. They are acting peacefully, and are not related to any terrorist attacks in Israel or the Palestinian area or any where else," Dr. 'Awad Khulayfat, minister of interior told reporters after his return from a visit to the Gaza this week. "We can not deport Jordanian citizens as the Jordanian Constitution bans such measures," he emphasized.

PNA [Palestinian National Authority] officials had criticized Jordan's role in allowing Hamas to function in Jordan. Mr. 'Arafat is reportedly dismayed at Jordan's past use of Hamas as an occasional pressure tool against the PLO.

Mr. Khulayfat rejected accusations that Jordan hosts groups that have a hand in the latest bombings against Israel. He reaffirmed that Hamas has no office in Jordan, adding that "Jordan condemns all forms of terrorist acts."

However some argue that Jordan was considered in the past an active place for the political activities of Hamas through its office in Amman. Late last year, the former Minister of Interior Mr Salamah Hamad ordered the arrest of Hamas spokesman in Amman Mr. Ghawshah, but this attempt failed as Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputies protested. Sources told THE STAR that the former government extracted a promise from Ghawshah and Nazzal to cease their political activities in Jordan

The same sources confirmed that Hamas has frozen its official activities and its press propaganda. But the source said the Government has not closed down the Hamas office in Amman, and it is still operating as an Islamic research Center. Mr. Ghawshah's office is located at the IAF headquarters.

Pressures to clamp down on Hamas has come at a sensitive time for the government which is trying to woo political factions to back its policies. The IAF has strongly criticized the government for condemning the recent bombings.

Nevertheless, the government is likely to seek the cooperation of the IAF to deal with Hamas in Jordan. The source said this is essential if Jordan is to avoid further embarrassment.

Jordan: 'Great Hopes' for King Husayn Meeting With Clinton

JN0703154896 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 7 Mar 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Eyes on Washington summit"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His Majesty King Husayn's talks with President Bill Clinton in Washington today come at a time when many issues in the Middle East are reaching critical mass. The impact and implications of the latest string of violent acts in the area need not only assessment but also analysis and examination in depth. We presume that the full import and implication of Israel's declaration of war against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], especially when it has taken an ominous dimension culminating in the virtual reoccupation of the West Bank and Gaza, will no doubt also receive a special attention by the two leaders.

In this context the latest Israeli moves demonstrate once again how fragile the Palestinian self-rule accords really are and to what extent the future of the peace process remains captive to acts of terrorism and violence on either side. The big and timely question that presents itself in light of the recent events is whether Israel should be encouraged to roll back everything that has been agreed upon each time a Hamas fanatic strikes at Israeli targets. Surely the White House would wish to counsel restraint against collective punishment of Palestinians who are also victims of these acts of terrorism.

The Iraqi situation will likewise figure highly on the agenda of the White House talks especially in the wake of recent developments in and around Iraq. The increasing prospects for Baghdad to sell oil-for-food under U.N. Security Council Resolution 986, presumably through Turkey, coupled with the economic implications of this step, needs to be measured and studied, since Jordan stands to be affected by it.

Equally important are relations between Jordan and the U.S. that still await an added push forward, whether on the economic level or on the urgently needed military aid to this country. Much of the rhetoric on expanded ties has yet to be translated into reality due to the many constraints on them especially the kind that requires congressional approval. Jordan hosted a major economic conference on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) last year in anticipation of tangible results that would benefit our people and the whole region. Waiting for much longer to see those results can indeed be detrimental to regional peace in which all parties invested heavily.

Still the fact that King Husayn and President Clinton will hold yet another summit reflects faithfully the special relations that bind the two leaders. Amman and Washington have indeed come a long way since the days of the Gulf crisis in 1991 when our historical friendship became so strained over the rift on how best to reverse the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The fact that King Husayn and President Clinton meet rather frequently says a lot about the degree of trust that both have in each other. We are certainly happy to see them meet again and pin great hopes on a truly positive outcome.

Jordan: King's Talks With Clinton in Washington Reported

JN0703175096 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Official talks between His Majesty King Husayn and His Excellency U.S. President Bill Clinton opened at the White House this afternoon. The talks deal with relations between the two friendly countries and developments in the Middle East in the wake of the suicide terrorist operations.

In statements to reporters before the talks, his majesty urged a concerted effort to prevent those responsible for the suicide bombings in Israel from continuing their activities. He added: The overwhelming majority of the Middle East wants peace. A small minority is attempting to damage the peace process and eliminate the achievements that have been made. They should not be allowed to succeed.

For his part, the U.S. President said he believes that Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, has made some real efforts to halt the bombings. He emphasized that it is necessary for all parties to make additional efforts to combat terrorism.

Jordan: King Meets With U.S. Secretary of State Christopher

JN0803064596 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Majesty King Husayn met with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the U.S. Department of State last night. They discussed bilateral relations and means to reinforce and develop these relations in various fields.

Discussions also dealt with the latest developments in the peace process, especially the recent bombings in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv, which were aimed at halting the peace process and returning the region to a state of tension and conflict.

The two sides expressed their support for the peace process and their decisive stand against all elements of extremism and all forms of terrorism. [passage omitted]

His Majesty King Husayn received U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown at his residence in Washington last night. Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti was present at the meeting. The two sides discussed economic cooperation. Brown expressed his country's support for Jordan's efforts in the field of development and encouraging mutual investment by reinforcing the private sector's role within the framework of regional cooperation that was stressed in the recommendations of the Amman Economic Summit, which also set up a clear mechanism to proceed in this field. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Crown Prince Stresses Need for Continued Peace Efforts

MS0803100996 London THE TIMES in English 8 Mar 96 p 19

[Letter by Crown Prince Hasan of Jordan: "Jordan Looks for Joint Peace Effort"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sir. Lord Jakobovits (letter, March 5 see also letter, March 6) [not processed] expresses a conclusion that all those of goodwill must reach: peace should be pursued as if there were no terrorism. However, it is not necessary to pursue terrorism as if there were no peace process, for the successes of the process so far make it possible for those who hold in common a vision of peace to fight terrorism together.

We in Jordan share the outrage and grief of the Israeli people. We feel that not only Israel has been targeted, but peace itself. Jordan has always stood against extremism. It has also been the victim of terrorism in the past, and it will never be a base for terrorist activity. We are constantly working with the Government of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority to counter such activity.

However, there is also a regional dimension to the problem, and there must be a co-operative effort to resolve it among the countries of our region who seek peace. It is not enough to denounce terrorist actions: ways must be found to limit their scope, and eliminate their roots. In a telephone conversation with President Mubarak of Egypt last Monday, and on RADIO ISRAEL, I have called for a "Regional Conference Against Terrorist Organisations" and the ways in which we can co-ordinate to deal with them. Participation in such a programme should be open to all who share its aims, and who are ready to accept the responsibilities involved.

I want to make it very clear that these acts of murder are alien and abhorrent to Islam as we understand it. Those who hold the killing of civilians to be a route to martyrdom have distorted their religion beyond recognition. I believe that such acts express impotence in the face of the peace process. Above all, it is therefore essential that the process continues. Any other response would play into the hands of the rejectionists. For only through peace can we achieve security. Only by offering our peoples new hope for a better life can we salvage something from the tragedy of death.

Jordan: Khulayfat—Passport, Citizenship Issues To Be Resolved Soon

JN0703190696 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 7 Mar 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by Tariq Ayyub]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — The interior minister, Dr. 'Awad Khulayfat, said Wednesday the ministry would soon solve the problem of Jordanians whose passports were confiscated for political reasons and pledged that all regulations concerning granting citizenship would be reconsidered within the framework of "Jordan's national interests."

Dr. Khulayfat, speaking to reporters following Tuesday's cabinet meeting, rejects speculation that the government intended to grant citizenship to 200,000 Palestinians, most of them of Gazan-origin living inside and outside the Kingdom. He said all applications for Jordanian citizenship would be treated in line with the citizenship law.

"The interior ministry will work on reviewing the special regulations related to granting citizenship and ensure that these regulations do not contradict with the citizenship law," the minister said. "There was a large number of people who were harmed in the past because their permanent passports were confiscated and were given temporary ones. We would work to solve their problems."

"Solving these problems should take into consideration the interests and sovereignty of Jordan," said Dr. Khulayfat.

The head of Freedoms Committee at the Lower House, Dhib 'Abdallah, welcomed the minister's comments and said that he was optimistic that all "mistakes" committed by the previous government would be corrected.

"Passports of many Jordanians were confiscated for political reasons. Some Jordanian embassies refused to renew the passports of citizens, and many people were denied their citizenships," Dr. 'Abdallah said.

He said that there were positive signals "from the al-Kabariti government that all these problems would be solved.

"We have to give this government some time to handle these issues," he said.

Mr. 'Abdallah, a member of the Islamic Action Front and a physician by profession, said he had met with Dr. Khulayfat, who told him that these problems would be solved soon.

"The right of citizenship should not be based on political thoughts or party loyalty of the citizen. It is a constitutional right of all Jordanians," the lawmaker added. "In many cases, favouritism and nepotism were the criteria for granting citizenship, this should come to an end."

Labib Kamhawi, spokesman of the Jordan chapter of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights AOHR, called upon the interior minister to take serious measures to solve the problems of those who were harmed as a result of "the mistakes of the former interior minister."

"We need public commitments from the government and the news interior minister to correct the mistakes and to grant citizens assurances and guarantees that their basic rights, especially of citizenship, would not be violated," Dr. Kamhawi said.

Dr. Kamhawi said that all complaints received by the AOHR regarding confiscation of passports were from Jordanians of Palestinian origin. "There were person whose citizenship and passport were withdrawn, detained when they complained about the confiscation. They were asked to hand over all documents they had concerning their passports and citizenships," he said.

"These methods are not constitutional and legal," he said.

Jordan: Human Rights Reports Note 'Sharp Increase' in Violations

JN0703194296 Amman Arab Organization for Human Rights in Jordan
Annual Report in Arabic February 1996

["Text" of annual report dated February 1996 issued by the AOHR in Jordan on human rights conditions in Jordan during 1995]

[FBIS Translated Text] During 1995, the Arab Organization for Human Rights [AOHR] in Jordan, observed a sharp increase, in type and frequency, in official and semi-official violations of human rights in Jordan. This was not limited to practices, but also manifested in legislation and decisions relating to issues of public liberties and democracy. Those decisions and legislation were either very strict on those issues or contradictory to them partially or wholly.

In addition, 1995 witnessed a serious development represented by the authorities' tendency to use the force of arms in dealing with civilians, which led to several deaths. The use of arms by Jordanian police resulted in the killing of two civilians.

Moreover, 1995 witnessed an increase in the use of physical violence with civilians, which resulted in bodily injuries and maimings. Some of the cases, which came to the knowledge of the organization, required hospitalization. This proves the existence of a general official inclination to give the security and police authorities a free hand in dealing with civilians through the use of force, intimidation, and brutality contrary to the law.

The peace agreements with Israel, the grave economic situation, the high cost of living, and the rise in unemployment have all contributed to expanding the base of political opposition to the government. This was followed by an erosion of government willingness to tolerate the other viewpoint and the lack of any desire to hold dialogue with the opposition. This resulted in the detention of several political opponents under various charges, such as criticizing the government and resisting normalization with the Zionist enemy.

Thus, 1995 witnessed a sharp increase in the number of complaints received by the AOHR, not to mention the violations it monitored on its own. This prompted the organization to release two reports; an urgent report and a regular one, plus several urgent appeals, which reflected the grave condition of public liberties and human rights in Jordan in 1995.

The year 1995 witnessed the development of two norms of official violations of human rights in Jordan:

First, excessive use or abuse of executive power.

Second, giving the executive authority the legal tools and means to violate the rights and basic freedoms of citizens in the name of the law.

Thus, it became the essential duty of our organization in Jordan to assume, over and above its normal tasks, the added responsibility of confronting those laws and working for their amendment or cancellation.

During 1995, several attempts were made to open channels of communication with the Jordanian Government to settle the complaints received from civilians and to coordinate matters with it to prevent any further violations and encroachment on human rights. However, the government's response to these attempts were absolutely the weakest on record. The government did not respond to more than 12 percent of the complaints and letters which were sent to the prime minister and other government officials. This attitude was a clear indication of the Jordanian Government's poor respect for human rights in 1995 and lack of desire to seriously tackle the deliberate violation of those rights.

The AOHR sent an invitation to the Jordanian Government to attend the celebration marking World Human Rights Day. In its speech on the occasion, the organization referred to frequent violations of human rights. Addressing the Jordanian Government through its representative at the celebration, the minister of justice, the organization referred to some of those violations and government failure to respond to its appeals. Nevertheless, the government maintained its negative attitude.

Regarding the executive authority's violation of basic civic rights, the AOHR received many complaints on the cancellation of nationality, confiscation of passports, forbidding Jordanian mothers from admitting their own non-Jordanian children into Jordan, and the General Intelligence Directorate's refusal to approve the appointment of Jordanians in security posts, although this is against the law. All that was accompanied by threats and psychological persecution, which created a state of anxiety and fear among many civilians. The security organs threatened many civilians for resorting to the AOHR or submitting their complaints to it.

Hence, the AOHR report on human rights conditions in Jordan during 1995 refers to violation of the following rights:

1. Basic Rights (Constitutional and Legal)

The Higher Council for Interpretation of the Constitution issued the following two decisions during 1995:

First: Decision No. 1 of 1995 places the Central Bank under the control of the Audit Bureau on matters relating to its revenues, expenditures, and disbursements.

Second: The decision which says that the House of Representatives cannot take a vote of confidence on the government or minister in an extraordinary session, and that it can exercise this power only in an ordinary session.

The AOHR and several other organizations as well as political figures and parties have criticized this decision since it deprives the House of Representatives of one of its basic rights, which is to control and supervise government work. An ordinary session does not last more than five months, which allows the convocation of more than one extraordinary session each year.

We must also refer in this respect to Decision No. 1 of 1994 which was issued by the Higher Council for Interpretation of the Constitution banning teachers from forming their own union. This decision resulted in the cancellation of the unions law, and so the teachers remained without a union.

It is noteworthy that Jordan does not have a constitutional court to consider constitutional laws. The only quarter enjoying this right is the Higher Council for Interpretation of the Constitution, which comprises four senators, who are appointed by the king, and five judges from the Court of Cassation. The council normally meets when there is a request to interpret an article of the Constitution.

During 1995, a law was issued ending the economic boycott and the ban on dealing with the enemy. This was Law No. 11 of 16 August 1995. This law resulted in the cancellation of the following laws:

A. The law banning the sale of real estate to the enemy issued in 1973.

B. The unified law on the boycott of Israel issued in 1958.

C. The law banning trade with Israel issued in 1953.

The passing of this law created the feeling among many citizens that it conflicts with their right not to want to deal with Israel as well as Jordan's obligations as member of the Arab League.

There were attempts by the government to amend the Press and Publication Law in order to restrict the freedom of the press and to pave the way for a new fragmentary election law, which would conflict with basic democratic rights. There were also attempts to amend or cancel laws pertaining to the professional unions and the Public Meetings Law. However, these attempts did not result in anything as of the date of the issuance of this report.

2. Right to Live

During 1995, there were two incidents involving official encroachment on the right to live. The AOHR is not aware of any other incidents, about which it was not informed.

The two incidents involving the encroachment on the right to life were:

1. The incident involving the murder of Jordanian citizen Mahmud 'Abd-al-Ra'uf Khalifah (al-'Awamilah), who died in his house from fatal wounds he received during an attempt by the police and security authorities to arrest him with the help of a large heavily-armed force. The information currently available to the organization says that so far the government has not set up a commission to investigate the causes of the murder or the deployment of such a large force to arrest a single individual. This casts a big shadow of doubt on the whole subject.

2. The incident involving the murder of the 22-year old Jordanian citizen Ahmad 'Ali Matar by a police officer for a traffic offense he committed while sitting next to a driver.

The AOHR sent letters to the prime minister on both incidents demanding an investigation and the referral of the perpetrators to court. However, it did not receive any reply.

The AOHR in Jordan requests the government to set up a special investigation commission under a magistrate and to include among its members magistrates, lawyers, and representatives of the Public Liberties Committee in the House of Representatives, the Bar Association Council, and the AOHR in Jordan, to investigate the two incidents mentioned above and to issue a statement on the investigation results in view of the gravity of the state's tendency toward the use of force.

3. The Right to Justice, Rule of Law, and Personal Safety

During 1995, and as far as this right is concerned, many violations were recorded by the AOHR. The main ones were the following:

— The public prosecutor summoned Bahjat Abu-Gharbiyah, chairman of the Jordanian Arab Committee for Confronting Submission and Normalization, several times for interrogation on the charge of forming and heading an illegal committee. Yet, this committee was formed by eight Jordanian political parties for the purpose of coordination. Moreover, a district court had previously issued a decision in the case involving the newspaper AL-MAJD, considering the aforementioned committee as legal, since it was formed by eight Jordanian political parties. Despite that, the public prosecutor decided to refer Abu-Gharbiyah and eight Jordanian political parties as well as several political figures to court on the charge of forming an illegal organization. This came in the decision issued by Public Prosecutor Majid Abu-Samrah on 8 May 1995.

— Public Prosecutor Mahmud al-'Ababinah summoned the deputies 'Abd-al-'Aziz Jabr, Dhib Anis, and Muhammad al-Haj for interrogation on the same charge. This took place after parliament was prorogued to deprive the deputies of their immunity.

— Engineer Layth Shubaylat, dean of the Engineers Union, was arrested on 9 December 1995 and referred to a state security court rather than a civil court. His lawyers were prevented from attending the initial interrogation following his arrest. There was also an attempt to detain his son, Farhan, when Shubaylat was not found at home. Throughout the detention period, Shubaylat was not allowed to meet privately with his defense counsel. The security organs also refused to carry out a court decision permitting the defense counsel to meet with Shubaylat. Moreover, the court rejected all appeals for his release on bail, although he was being held on an offense which permits such a release while the case is under consideration. Thus, the AOHR observes that the case against Engineer Layth Shubaylat is a political issue and the extraordinary measures taken against him are a clear violation of the law.

We are pleased to refer here to a decision by the Court of Cassation in the Mu'tah case, where two of the accused were acquitted when it was discovered that they were tortured and that their confessions were obtained under duress. The decision also canceled the death and life imprisonment sentences and ordered the acquittal and release of all detainees.

Unfortunately, however, the authorities that carried out the court decision deprived the released detainees of their rights to return to their jobs and university colleges. They also withheld their passports and identity cards. These people continue to appeal to the authorities to restore their aforementioned rights, but all this has been in vain. No legal quarter has attempted to carry out an investigation into the causes of the oppressive detention to which these citizens were exposed and to compensate them for the bodily, moral, and psychological harm they have suffered as a result of their detention on a false charge, which the court ruled to be wrong.

The AOHR also observed an increase in the number of civilians who were being referred to state security courts on political charges, such as criticizing the government or distributing leaflets and poems. Several of these civilians received actual prison sentences for periods ranging from three months to three years. They included, among others, Engineer 'Ata Abu-al-Rashtah, Dr. Ahmad al- Shama[illegible], and Muhammad Sadaqah.

4. Treatment of Prisoners and Other Detainees

A. A mission consisting of members of AOHR's administrative board visited Sawwaqah Prison to inspect the conditions of prisoners there. Although the authorities made advanced preparations for the visit and enabled mission members to become acquainted with conditions and talk to prisoners, mission members observed that prisoners were reluctant to give them any information about their conditions, such as how they are being treated and whether they are allowed to receive visitors and contact their lawyers and relatives, or are being subjected to solitary confinement etc. In fact, one prisoner whispered in the ear of a mission member that prison wardens had threatened them with solitary confinement after the mission's departure if they complained to any member of the mission.

The AOHR mission observed that criminal charges were brought against political and security detainees, who are classified as criminals. They are not considered to be political detainees or prisoners of conscience, since this enables government officials to claim that there are no political prisoners in Jordan.

B. The AOHR continues to receive complaints about the condition of detention cells at police stations and the manhandling of some detainees through beating, torture, and insults, and also about the bad detention conditions and the poor standard of humanitarian and health services at those stations. Despite the many letters sent and reports released in this regard, the authorities continue to ignore the subject and refuse to give it any attention. It is unfortunate that these detention cells are no more than bare rooms with no seats or beds. Detainees are literally crammed into the cells and deprived of any food or drink unless they pay for it. Detention can continue for several days, although the law clearly forbids any detention for more than 24 hours.

C. The AOHR has observed from the complaints it receives the widespread use of physical violence in handling prisoners and detainees. One civilian came to the organization's headquarters while its administrative board was in session and revealed wounds and bruises all over his body. He said he escaped from the Public Prosecutor's Department after being held at the al-Muhajirin police station for interrogation and being beaten along with another colleague, who, he said, was still at the station hanging from his legs and being tortured. The administrative board members left immediately for the police station to inspect the detention cell, but they were banned from entering. The members had to return and send a letter to the interior minister and to contact the inspector general of security and inform him of the incident. We have not received anything so far to indicate that any measure has been taken against those responsible for torturing that citizen and his colleague.

D. The AOHR received a complaint on the detention conditions of pharmacist Ghassan al-Da'ur, who suffered tuberculosis while in prison. The authorities were compelled to remove him to al-Bashir Hospital for treatment. The detainee was chained to the bed throughout his stay in hospital.

E. The General Intelligence Directorate continues to detain citizens for months without trial. The AOHR received many complaints in this regard, and the authorities admitted this in their reply to one of the organization's letters on the case of student 'Abd-al-Rahman Muhammad Ahmad al-'Amiri, who was detained on 5 June 1995. In his reply, the interior minister said 'Abd-al- Rahman al-'Amiri was detained on the charge of forming armed groups and that he was released on 30 July 1995 due to the lack of any evidence against him. Naturally, that unwarranted detention prevented the student from sitting for his secondary school exams [tawjihi]. This is one of dozens of examples that have been brought to the attention of the authorities through a series of letters, and they all prove the widespread use of force, detention measures, and oppressive arrests against civilians.

5. The Right To Form Associations

The AOHR did not receive any complaint in this regard during 1995.

6. The Right to Free Opinion and Expression

The year 1995 witnessed the continuation of the Jordanian Government and its institutions in violating the citizen's right to free opinion and expression through state monopoly of the official and semiofficial press, including its ownership of shares in press establishments that publish daily papers in excess of the limit allowed under the provisions of the Press and Publications Law. This is in addition to state ownership of television and radio, which are used exclusively to express official policy and defend this policy. Thus, the other viewpoint has been deprived of using these media to express itself on crucial issues. Since free opinion and expression is a basic right that is guaranteed by the Jordanian constitution and international pacts, withholding this right for any reason and under any excuse is a direct violation of the Jordanian citizen's human rights.

Since the information media belong to the state and not the government, it is essential to emphasize the full independence and neutrality of the news media, which are owned by the state. They must not be considered a tool for the executive authority in its dealings with citizens. Consequently, the private sector should be allowed to own and run all news media, not just the press. This would enable the other viewpoint to express itself on different issues with full freedom and thus help establish the foundations of freedom, democracy, and social peace in an effective manner.

The year 1995 also witnessed further hardening of the attitude of state officials on the implementation of certain provisions of the Press and Publications Law, which, to begin with, conflict with other provisions and with the citizen's right to express his viewpoint freely and openly. This led to the detention of several chief editors of newspapers for publishing reports that the authorities construed as violating the Press and Publications Law, such as the mere mention of the Jordanian Arab Popular Committee for Confronting Submission and Normalization, an organization that the government has chosen to consider as illegal. The Jordanian authorities have not approached the courts directly in order to determine the legality of this committee. However, this committee was considered legal after the decision by an Amman district court in the case that was filed against the newspaper AL-MAJD for mentioning the committee's name.

The court decision says: In view of what was submitted and since the Jordanian Arab Popular Committee for Confronting Submission and Normalization is not an independent party, but a coordination committee for eight Jordanian political parties, the court decides under Article 178 of the penal code that the defendants are not responsible for the charges that were brought against them."

7. The Right to Peaceful Assembly and Holding Public Meetings

The year 1995 witnessed increased interference on the part of administrative governors by encroaching on the right of citizens to organize public meetings, lectures, and peaceful assembly, such as letter No. 4/21/2599, in which the Amman governor forbade the Jordanian Engineers Union from holding a public meeting, and preventing former Prime Minister Ahmad 'Ubaydat from addressing a public meeting at the unions complex in Irbid and former Prime Minister Tahir al-Masri from delivering a lecture in Amman. This constitutes a violation of the law and the fundamental right of the Jordanian citizen to express his opinion. Other decisions were made by administrative governors to prevent public meetings and lectures.

In light of the above, the call by some Jordanian officials to restore the emergency powers of administrative governors is an open invitation for a return to martial law, the suppression of freedoms, and the violation of rights. Although this call is camouflaged by social justifications, its real aim is to circumvent the judicial and legal system in the interest of administrative measures aimed at facilitating the violation of citizens' rights and freedoms by restoring the emergency powers of the administrative governors.

For instance, the methods that the Amman Governorate used in 1995 to deal with certain nongovernmental societies and organizations, such as banning the convocation of the Jordanian Popular Conference for Protecting the Homeland and Confronting Normalization and storming the unions complex during a public meeting attended by Najib al-Rashdan, chairman of the Royal Committee for the Center of Freedom and Democratic Studies, and Senator Hamad al-Farhan, secretary general of the National Congress, are proof of what can be expected if the emergency powers of administrative governors are restored at the expense of the judicial system.

The AOHR warns of the danger of interfering with the judicial system in any way and calls for bolstering the judiciary with the necessary competent people, ridding it of unsuitable elements, and working for the cancellation of the emergency law, which is associated with executive authority, since any expansion or strengthening of the emergency law authorities will be a serious threat to human rights and public liberties.

8. The Right to Free Movement and Residence

The year 1995 witnessed obvious contraventions by security and administrative organs. These were reflected in the number and nature of complaints received by the AOHR from Jordanian and Arab citizens. In light of these complaints, the organization observed the following:

A. An increase in the number of persons detained and remanded pending investigation under the pretext of maintaining security. One example is the detention of the citizen Muhammad Wasfi 'Umar Mas'ud Abu-Khalil since 15 March 1994. Having been detained at the Intelligence Directorate for six months, Abu-Khalil was transferred to Suwaqah prison. On 13 April 1995, we addressed a message to the prime minister, asking him to release Abu-Khalil and refer him to court, since it is impermissible to detain him for such a long period. The organization has not received any reply. Citizen Yahya Ibrahim al-Zughli has been detained since 6 October 1994 in connection with Case No.1,698/94. No legal measures have been taken to refer him to court in all this time. We sent a letter the prime minister on 6 May 1995 regarding his case. There are dozens of other examples.

B. An increase in the number of complaints about preventing Jordanian citizens from entering Jordan and withholding passports or refusing to renew them, although this is a clear violation of the constitution and the law and a blatant infringement of the individual's right to exercise his constitutional and legal rights, including the right to obtain a passport and move freely. There are scores of Jordanian families that are still living abroad because they are not allowed to return and their passports cannot be renewed.

The year 1995 was marked by the Jordanian Interior Ministry oppressing Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin and failing to treat some of them as ordinary citizens with the right to obtain regular passports. The AOHR received complaints concerning the cancellation of citizenship and the confiscation of passports, official family records, and other identification documents. There are humanitarian cases that are several years old, such as the case of Kamal Abu-Gharbiyah, who has not been able to return with his family to his Jordanian homeland for 20 years, and Jordanian citizen Walid Yusuf Kan'an, who was detained at Queen 'Aliyah Airport for nine days simply because his Jordanian passport had expired.

C. There is also the martial law mentality that dominates the behavior and thinking of some state organs and those who are responsible for them and the use of martial law tactics, despite their illegality, for the purpose of violating the rights of the Jordanian individual. For instance, Jordanian security men searched the dentists union delegation on its way to Iraq to attend a conference. The delegation was detained at the border for six hours and all its male and female members were subjected to personal frisking and the search of their luggage. The AOHR sent a letter to the prime minister to protest the security men's behavior toward the medical delegation. However, we have not received anything to indicate that any measures have been taken or even that some attention has been given to the subject.

D. Security bodies have been summoning more and more citizens, contrary to the provisions of the laws and regulations. Citizens are being summoned for their articles, stands, or opinions, although these offices are not authorized to carry out such investigation and summoning, which are considered an abuse of authority.

E. The use of the tactic of interrogation and collection of information in a way that violates the law and human rights, such as holding relatives hostage until the appearance of wanted persons, and the use of violence and humiliating methods by security men against wanted persons or their relatives.

9. The Right to Participate in Running Public Affairs

There have been violations during municipal elections in some areas, where some candidates and parties accused the authorities of rigging elections and preventing candidates or their representatives from gaining access to polling stations in al-Zarqa', al-Rusayfah, Amman, and other cities. Complaints have confirmed attempts by the authorities to prevent some candidates or their representatives from sitting at polling stations. The Jordanian authorities have not carried out any neutral investigation into these charges.

The sound implementation of the laws that organize the process of electing representatives or officials for government and nongovernment posts is a major sign of commitment to and respect for the democratic process, since these laws are aimed at enabling citizens to elect persons who will run their public affairs.

The laws applied in Jordan were not amended in 1995. However, attempts are being made by the state and the citizens to amend them. For instance, a memo signed by 16 deputies calls for canceling the government's right to appoint half of the members of the Greater Amman Municipal Council and treating the Greater Amman Municipality like any other city in the Kingdom so that the Amman mayor and all members of the Amman Municipal Council can be elected directly by the citizens.

There are also attempts to amend the current election law of the House of Representatives, since it violates the principle of equality among citizens, such as giving citizens the right of one vote, only without effecting similar changes in the number of parliamentary seats for each constituency and without giving that one vote the same power in every constituency. Furthermore, the current law does not take into consideration the principle of equality and justice by making the distribution of parliamentary seats among constituencies dependent on the density of population. Thus, we find that a constituency that has a population of more than 300,000 citizens has only three deputies, while another constituency with less than 60,000 citizens also has three deputies.

The AOHR emphasizes the need to amend electoral laws commensurate with the requirements and bases of sound democracy and in a manner that takes into consideration the fulfillment of justice and equality among citizens and the right of everyone to participate in running public affairs.

10. The Right to Work

The General Intelligence Directorate continues to interfere in the appointment of employees and issuance of passports and ban travel. The AOHR has received many complaints in this regard, such as the case of the citizen Kayid Nizar Kalbunah, who was dismissed from his job at al-Husayn Youth City at the recommendation of the General Intelligence Directorate and was also banned from working with Royal Jordanian. He is still deprived of a job.

The organization has also observed an increase in the number of cases where citizens are banned from working in certain government departments or of being oppressively transferred from these departments at the behest of the security organs. This is a violation of the law and an encroachment on citizens' rights. The AOHR in Jordan calls on the Jordanian Government to strictly abide by its earlier decisions to stop consulting with security organs before appointing employees and to return every citizen to the job he has lost as a result of those measures. The organization also calls on the House of Representatives to pass the necessary laws in order to protect Jordanian citizens against such measures.

This report does not claim that it has covered all violations and measures that violate the law and constitute cases of encroachment on the rights of the individual in Jordan during 1995, because the AOHR receives only a few complaints about these violations for many reasons: mainly, some citizens are afraid of being prosecuted or harmed if they make any complaints against the security organs or authorities. Therefore, the AOHR in Jordan calls on the citizens, nongovernmental organizations, and civic associations to inform it of any violation or encroachment on their rights and also of any illegal measure that might affect them, provided that it is backed by the necessary documents.

We also appeal to all parliamentary, political, social, and cultural organizations and the various sections of the Jordanian society and its institutions to pool their efforts and cooperate in order to confront any violation of human rights. We call upon them to unify their efforts to confront any violation of the law, because the future of democracy and the respect for and the sound application of democracy are closely linked with the respect for human rights.

Finally, the AOHR observed during 1995 the existence of a serious phenomenon: the open use of force, represented by murder and assassination, on one hand, and physical violence, on the other. This was not accompanied by any government attempt to disavow or denounce this phenomenon, but rather to find justifications for it.

Thus, it looked as though it was an established policy aimed at terrorizing and intimidating the citizens. This is a serious development that must be watched and followed closely by all human rights organizations in the Arab homeland and the world. It calls for a concerted effort to urge the Jordanian Government to cancel these negative policies and to restore the rule of law and the control of popular and democratic institutions over all security organs. In presenting the human rights conditions in Jordan for 1995, we hope that the government will work toward stopping these violations so that we will not be compelled to form an Arab fact- finding commission to investigate human rights conditions in Jordan.

[Signed] The Arab Organization for Human Rights in Jordan, February 1996

Lebanon: All 'Services' Alerted for Fear of Israeli Attack

NC0803065596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The picture remains unclear as to what Israel will do in light of its threats against Lebanon and some of the region's states on the pretext of fighting terrorism. In its campaign, which has created tension in Lebanon and the region, Israel is supported by the United States on the pretext of keeping the peace process on track. Israel has said that this peace process has become irrelevant after the explosions that have rocked the heart of Israel.

Lebanon, which is watching the quick developments, has doubled its contacts with Syria and alerted all its services, including the Army, to confront the possibility of an aggressive Israeli escalation against it.

The Lebanese Army has adopted strict measures on the crossings between the liberated and occupied areas. These crossings have remained open on the Lebanese side.

Lebanon: Army Said on 'High Alert' To Prevent Hamas Deportations

TA0803091496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There is a high level of alert along the Lebanese border stemming from the concern that Hizballah may attempt to renew its attacks following the success of the recent Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] suicide bombings. The Lebanese Army is also on the alert, out of fear that Israel may attempt to deport Hamas activists to Lebanon. Our correspondent in the north Menahem Horowitz reports:

[Begin Horowitz recording] The reports in Israel of tough punitive measures in the territories against Arabs belonging to Hamas have spurred the Lebanese Army to go on alert. In the past, harsh measures against Hamas have meant the deportation of its activists to areas outside Israel. The Lebanese still remember the 400 Hamas members who were deported to Lebanon and spent long months north of the Marj al-Zuhur crossing in the security zone. The commanders of the Lebanese Army declared they would not permit Israel to deport residents of the territories to Lebanon. All Lebanese units have been placed on high alert.

In the security zone itself, a high level of alert has been maintained since the serious terrorist attack against soldiers from the Golani Brigade on the evening of 4 March. The terrorists directed light weapons fire and lobbed mortar bombs at IDF [Israel Defense Forces] positions in the eastern sector of the security zone. There were no casualties. South Lebanese sources say that the Hizballah terrorists are encouraged by Hamas' recent successes. It is feared that Hizballah may attempt to step up its attacks, perhaps with the encouragement of Iran, the patron of both groups. [end recording]

Lebanon: Islamic Jihad Claims Responsibility for Tel Aviv Bombing

NC0703204396 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 7 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Jihad in Palestine today claimed responsibility for the suicide operation that killed 13 people in Tel Aviv on Monday [4 March]. The AFP office in Beirut received a statement by the Islamic Jihad from Jerusalem saying that the suicide and martyrdom operation in Tel Aviv is a link in the chain of retaliation for the blood of Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi, who was killed by the Israeli Mosad in Malta.

Lebanon: Dallul—U.S. State Department Report 'Incites' Citizens

NC0803070196 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul has stated that the U.S. State Department annual report on human rights and its unfair accusations against the Lebanese Government are for domestic U.S. consumption and for direct electoral gains in view of the approaching U.S. presidential elections. He said the report incites Lebanese citizens to commit serious acts against the country's security. The U.S. Administration has no right to involve itself in Lebanese domestic affairs that only concern the Lebanese people.

Lebanon: Ministers React to U.S. State Department Report on Lebanon

NC0703172396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on the U.S. State Department annual report concerning Lebanon, Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz said that since the end of the civil war Lebanon has gone a long way in achieving security, stability, justice, and human rights in general. Lebanon, he said, may be one of the few countries of the world where freedom and democracy are practiced.

Speaking on the same theme, Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul said that the U.S. State Department report is intended for domestic U.S. consumption and for election purposes. He said that the U.S. Administration has no right to involve itself in Lebanese domestic affairs that concern only the Lebanese people.

Lebanon: Hizballah's Qasim Calls For Continued Jihad Operations

NC0703211596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1750 GMT 7 Mar 95

[Interview with Shaykh Na'im Qasim, Hizballah's deputy secretary general, by Mahdi Hasan; date not given; from the "News and Reports" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] Some say that these jihad operations, significant and grand as they are, are of little merit in the absence of a comprehensive Arab or Islamic strategy. What do you think?

[Qasim] Had these operations been of little merit, they would not have created an uproar in the world in favor of the Israeli enemy. Had they had limited or little effects, Israel would not have suspended, even if superficially, the negotiations with Syria or mobilized the Western, particularly the U.S., forces to cooperate with Israel to confront the threat to security, which is the very essence of the Israeli entity. To wait for Arab or Islamic strategies means to be unrealistic, to waste time, to miss opportunities, and to give the enemy the chance to establish itself and stabilize its entity, thus depriving us of future opportunities. And what Arab or Islamic strategy could we rely on when we see countries racing to establish ties with Israel and back the usurping entity, under excuses of necessity and other matters? Thus, waiting for a unified Arab or Islamic strategy is in reality a retreat, hesitation, and an attempt to find excuses for oneself for not doing what needs to be done. We call for the continuation of such jihad operations because they have had an effect and will have more effects in the future, God willing, and because they constitute an alternative that one day may lead to an Arab strategy; that is, it may rally people around it. Beyond the scope of this alternative, there is nothing but a grave impasse that gives Israel all the opportunities at a time when Israel must not be given any opportunity to catch its breath, because that would pose a threat to everybody.

[Hasan] Thank you, Your Eminence Shaykh Na'im Qasim, deputy secretary general of Hizballah, for giving us this chance.

Lebanon: Buwayz Denies Receiving Invitation to Anti-Terror Summit

NC0803081496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israel continues to beat the drums of war against terrorism. It is supported by the United States, which is giving it direct aid. Israel is making contacts in preparation for an international anti-terrorism summit conference. This conference may be held at the Egyptian sea resort of Taba on 13 March. Israeli radio said that this summit will be attended by 30 countries and led by U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has denied that Lebanon has received any invitation to attend such a conference. REUTERS quoted a ministerial source as saying that Lebanon will review such an invitation if it receives one. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Concern Voiced Over Israeli Reprisal Hint

MM0703161396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Walid Shuqayr: "Retaliation in Lebanon Is the Easiest but Does Not Achieve Results for Israel"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Beirut — A senior Lebanese official does not rule out the possibility that Israeli reprisals could include Lebanon following the suicide operations carried out by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv, namely through lightning operations against Lebanese or Palestinian fundamentalist Islamic organizations close to Iran. However, he thinks any Israeli reprisals in Lebanon will achieve nothing for the Israeli side, because the operations carried out by Hamas took place in the heart of — not outside —the occupied Palestinian territories.

The official told AL-HAYAH that "the allusion to Lebanon in Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' statements following the operation carried out by the Islamic Revolutionary Army for the Liberation of All Palestine [al-jaysh al-thawri al-islami li tahrir kul Filastin] in the occupied border strip is an easy kind of threat to make against Lebanon. The aim is to divert attention from the shock that has afflicted Israeli society as a result of the major operations carried out by Palestinian elements from Hamas — which raises the question of the link between Israel and the self-rule areas and the fundamentalists there."

The senior Lebanese official's remarks come at a time when big questions are being asked at the political and official levels in Lebanon in a bid to try to read the developments taking place in Israel and the Palestinian areas and international reactions, and to assess their effects on the peace process and the Lebanese stage.

The senior Lebanese official believes that the central question is: What will the Americans and the Israelis do together to guarantee Shim'on Peres' success in the

Israeli legislative elections scheduled to be held in May and to guarantee U.S. President Bill Clinton's success in winning a second term in office in November?

Reviewing the potential outcome of the serious situation resulting from the recent dramatic developments — on the basis of diplomatic reports received in Beirut — a Lebanese diplomatic source following Israeli affairs says that the formation of a Labor-Likud coalition government would mean the suspension of the peace process. As for a Likud election victory, that would mean a war plan, because it would lead to a reconsideration of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement and a hard-line policy aimed at subjugating the Palestinians in order to prevent the establishment of a state for them.

The diplomatic source believes that "despite the big blow dealt to Peres as a result of the Hamas bombings, the latter's decision to suspend its operations until June — if that suspension holds — offers an opportunity before the Israeli elections to implement some U.S.-Israeli steps to strengthen Peres' electoral position to guarantee his success."

The Lebanese diplomatic source believes that "a group of political, economic, financial, and military figures who are sensitive with regard to the U.S. support could exploit the situation to extricate Peres from the crisis he is experiencing, as Hamas' operations have affected his popularity."

The source said: "Lebanon is concerned over potential reprisal attacks and the interactions between what is going to happen and what the Israelis and the Americans are planning to do, for numerous reasons [following paragraphs as published]:

The possibility of launching strikes in Lebanon gradually, depending on which area is "easiest" for the Israelis, starting with the south, Beirut, or al-Biqa', to hit the centers of fundamentalist organizations or groups. Moreover in al-Biqa' it is Syria that is most concerned with the matter. Naturally the Lebanese authorities will take the necessary precautions to prevent adverse security effects from any strikes that they are unable to repulse. However, strikes of that kind are not a radical solution to the problem between the Israelis and the Iranian-backed trends opposed to peace.

He says: "The Lebanese authorities are experiencing further Iranian-fundamentalist concern over the attempts to subjugate fundamentalists in Lebanon. As a result, the fundamentalists have adopted a hard-line policy as regards tackling a number of domestic Lebanese issues such as the media law, parliamentary elections, and so on. They want to retain their positions and not abandon them at this stage for fear that they might be checked by any group for the sake of peace.

"The United States is not concealing the fact that it has asked Syria to contribute to tightening the noose around the fundamentalists and ending their activities, whether on Syrian territory or on Lebanese territory or even within the Syrian-Iranian relationship, within the framework of the U.S.-Israeli policy demanding that Syria prove its good intentions by keeping away from Iranian opposition to peace with Israel."

The diplomatic source says: "Washington's and Tel Aviv's demands existed before Hamas' recent operations, and they will become tougher after these operations. So far Syria has managed to maintain an acceptable level of cooperation with Iran and a presence in Lebanon without this being affected by its engagement in serious negotiations with Israel."

The Lebanese diplomatic source says that "Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi's visit to Damascus last week has not eliminated Iranian opposition to Syria's decision to opt for peace. However, Iran cannot be in a state of disagreement with Syria, because Syria is Iran's gateway to the Middle East." [passage omitted]

Syria: Algerian Mediation Effort With Iraq Confirmed

MM0703161796 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Mar 96 p 4

[Report by Ibrahim Humaydi: "Syrian Confirmation of Algerian Mediation Between Damascus and Baghdad"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus — Informed sources in Damascus have told AL-HAYAH that one of the reasons for Syrian vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam's visit to Algiers and his conveyance of a "private message" to President Zeroual from President Hafiz al-Asad was the "issue of the mediation that Algeria intends to conduct between Syria and Iraq."

The sources pointed out that Khaddam's visit to Algiers followed that of Iraqi Vice President Taha Yasin. [passage omitted]

Syria: Al-Shar' Confers With PLO's Qaddumi

JN0703135696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Faruq al-Shar', the minister of foreign affairs, received Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, this morning. The meeting was attended by Taha al-Khayrat, director of the Arab Homeland Desk at the Foreign Ministry; Mahmud al-Khalidi, representative of the PLO in Damascus; and 'Umar al-Shak'ah, director at the PLO Political Department. Talks centered on the peace process and developments in the Palestinian arena.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Council Aware of Hezb-e Eslami Talks With Government

LD0703195296 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abdol Hadi Arghandiwal, head of the military committee of Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] of Afghanistan said yesterday by telephone to SHAHADAT that the officials of the Coordination Council [alliance of three anti-government opposition groups] are aware of the progress of talks currently going on between Hezb-e Eslami and the government. Arghandiwal added that there is complete understanding and coordination among the members of the council.

As far as Hezb-e Eslami is concerned, the party is following exactly the council's declared formal stance for resolving the crisis. Arghandiwal added: At a meeting held yesterday, Hazrat Saheb [referring to former president Sebghatollah Mojaddedi] and other members of the council were informed about the details of talks between Hezb-e Eslami and the government. The council members expressed confidence at Hezb-e Eslami's stance and proposals. He added that in yesterday's meeting, concern was expressed about (?incidents) in the north. Hazrat Saheb held a telephone conversation with [words indistinct] and asked them to control the situation.

Afghanistan: Opposition Group Signs Military Accord With Government

LD0703210596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] of Golboddin Hekmatyar and the government of Borhanoddin Rabbani have signed a joint military agreement.

According to a report from Kabul by the correspondent of the Islamic Republic's news unit, on the basis of this agreement a joint military high council will be set up with representatives from both sides. This council will have the duty of working out plans for defense and joint action against attacks by the Taleban group.

This high council will consist of five representatives from the Afghan Government and its allies, including the council of the Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity] party in Kabul, the Harakat-e Eslami [Islamic Revolution Movement] party of Ayatollah Mohseni and the Ettehad-e Eslami [Islamic Union] party of Rasul Sayyaf, and four representatives from Hezb-e Eslami [led by Golboddin Hekmatyar].

The joint high military council, which will be based in Kabul, will provide military supplies to other provincial and regional councils. This agreement also envisages five regional councils. The joint military agreement between the Hezb-e Eslami and the Afghan Government is the second written agreement signed during the past month.

It should be mentioned that both sides earlier signed an agreement on supply of electric power to Kabul city from hydro- electric power stations located in Naghlo [50 miles east of Kabul] and Sarobi [60 miles east of Kabul].

Afghanistan: Rabbani Praises Iran's Efforts To Restore Peace

LD0803124196 Tehran IRNA in English 1143 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dushanbe, March 8, IRNA — Visiting Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani on Friday [8 March] appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for its efforts to restore peace and stability to Afghanistan.

Rabbani, speaking at a press conference here, said that Iran during the past few months has despatched a number of mediatory delegations to Afghanistan to pave the way for establishment of peace in the war-torn country, which is indicative of Iran's attention to regional security.

The Afghan president said that he did not want his country's internal issues, which are directly linked with regional peace, to be solved by military means.

He said that he was in favour of negotiations with the Taleban group.

On his visits to Iran, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, the Afghan president said that friendly relations with neighbouring nations are of high importance for Kabul and his trips to the said states had been quite effective in improving Kabul's ties with those countries.

Rabbani maintained that friendly and peaceful cooperation among the regional states would certainly boost the economy of the region.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Opposition Leader Flees Rally Following Bombs, Gunfire

BK0703132696 Hong Kong AFP in English 1320 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, March 7 (AFP) — Bangladesh opposition leader Sheikh Hasina Wajed fled a rally in Dhaka on Thursday after bombs were let off and shots fired, witnesses said.

Wajed appeared briefly at the rally organised by her Awami League party in front of its main offices in the Gulistan district.

A number of home-made bombs went off and shots were fired, witnesses said. Wajed and other party leaders fled the scene in panic. Many in the crowd also took shelter.

The police fired tear gas when they intervened to restore order, witnesses said, and several people received minor injuries in the panic. Awami League sources blamed the attack on supporters of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

Bangladesh: BNP Official Comments on Political Crisis, Opposition

BK0803032196 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BNP [Bangladesh National Party] Joint Secretary General and Food and Agriculture Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has said the current political crisis would be solved through the newly elected Sixth Parliament. He was speaking at a press briefing in Dhaka last night.

Replying to the conditions put forward by the Awami League president, Sheikh Hasina, he said the question of dissolution of Parliament would come only after the amendment of the Constitution providing necessary provisions for a nonparty government to conduct future general elections. Mr. Mannan Bhuiyan sought cooperation of the opposition parties to (?improve) the law and order situation in the greater interest of the country.

Bangladesh: Aid Donors Express 'Grave Concern' Over Political Crisis

BK0803060896 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Development partners of Bangladesh have expressed grave concern at the serious impact of the worsening political and law and order situation on the country. At a meeting in Dhaka, representatives of different donor countries and agencies felt that political stability is a precondition for development. They said that a quick return to normalcy is essential if Bangladesh is to avoid a further devastating loss of export markets and foreign investments. They cautioned that once the export market is lost it will be very hard to regain and may take years to reestablish Bangladesh's reputation as a reliable supplier. The development partners urged the political leaders to engage immediately in frank and constructive dialogue for a resolution to the ongoing crisis.

Representatives of Asian Development Bank, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, UNDP [UN Development Program], UNICEF, USA, World Bank, World Food Program, and Ford Foundation were present at the meeting.

India

India: Kashmiri Leader Shabbir Shah Arrested

BK0803131796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the Kashmir valley, People's League leader Shabbir Shah, was taken into preventive custody after he and some of his supporters tried to defy prohibitory orders in Srinagar this morning. His supporters also tried to block the traffic and pelted stones on the police in which the SHO [Station House Officer] of the area and four policemen were injured.

India: Two Top Militants Among 23 Arrested in Kashmir, Delhi

BK0703151896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, the security forces have arrested another 22 militants during antimilitancy operations in the valley during the last 24 hours. Ten AK rifles, six pistols, mines and grenades, and a large quantity of ammunition were recovered during the operation. One of the arrested militants includes a top member of the Hizbul Mujahideen outfit. One militant was killed in an encounter with security forces at Nagpal in Tral area of Pulwama District.

The Delhi police have arrested an active member of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front [JKLF] and Hizbul Mujahideen from a restaurant in northwest Delhi. Police said that Mohammad Ramzan Sheikh, resident of Baramula, had come to Delhi to contact his group members. During the interrogation, he disclosed that he first joined the JKLF in 1991 and crossed over to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

India: Delhi Said To Get Russian Antimissile Missiles 'Soon'

BK0703132896 Delhi FINANCIAL EXPRESS in English 2 Mar 96 p 9

[Report by Huma Siddiqui in New Delhi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India is soon going to acquire the S-300 PMU (Grumble) anti-missile missiles from Russia in the wake of reports that China has shifted an unspecified number of M-11 missiles to Pakistan.

Highly-placed sources in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) revealed that the Russians have quoted Rs

800 crore per system for the Grumble S-300 PMU comprising a target tracking vehicle fitted with the most modern radar system, launch vehicle and a pack of anti-missile missiles. However, there is a likelihood that S-300 PMU V version of the Grumble would cost India anything between Rs 400 to Rs 500 crore a system. But then Indian defence experts are quite clear on one thing. "Cheaper models can only add to our woes. We must go for something with 100 per cent kill potential."

Sources revealed that the Russian are willing to cut down the prices if India was interested in some off-the-shelf buying of Tor and Buck missiles. Tor (Gauntlet) as defence experts opine is all equivalent of the US's latest air defence mechanism SAM-XV.

The S-300 PMU goes by the name of Grumble missile and is believed to be far more effective than the US made 'Patriots' used by the Israel to counter Scud missiles fired by Iraq during the Gulf war.

Russia has also offered India a whole range of Tungushka M. Tor and Buck to name the few. The last two are known as Gauntlet and Gadfly in the European market.

India has some of the earlier versions of SAM series of air defence missiles Buck (Dafly) [preceding work as published] too India has earlier versions in its inventory. [sentence as published] These missiles were on display at the IDEX '95 in Abu Dhabi defence exhibition. Russians are only too willing to demonstrate the potential capabilities of these missiles at a short notice.

Sources in the air defence wing of the Indian armed forces confirm that a demand for antimissiles (AMMs) was projected to the MoD some time ago, although it has come under active consideration only very recently particularly after the news about Pakistan deploying the M-11 along the borders was known.

In 1988, India was offered S-300V AMM before the Soviet Union broke up. There was a lesson for India to learn from the Gulf war. According to a confidential report of the military attache in the Indian mission in Tel Aviv soon after the war said, "on a number of occasions Patriot missiles were not able to be annihilate the Scuds in the air. [quotation marks as published]

The result was that some of these (Patriots) only helped in deflecting the oncoming missiles to the populated areas, causing more damage than there would have been had the Scuds were allowed to follow their original trajectory.

Thereafter India started looking for something more than S-300V. The one that could completely destroy the enemy missile in the air. When Russia's Deputy Defence Minister Andrie Kokoshin during his visit to New Delhi late last year invited senior Indian officials to witness the trials of their third generation S-300 PMU.

It was some time in August 1995 that a team of Indian experts. present during the trials specially conducted for them, found the weapon very potent.

Sources revealed that the performance report of Grumble (S-300 PMU) was certainly very impressive but at the same time the experts present were looking around for some thing similar with the western nations.

India: Parliament Proceedings Disrupted Over Bribery Issue

BK0703161996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Both the houses of Parliament were repeatedly adjourned today on the hawala [illegal money transfer] issue. In the Lok Sabha, the opposition members demanded the resignation of the prime minister in view of the Supreme Court's latest order to the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] in the hawala case. The members, who were on their feet, trooped into the well of the house. The speaker, Mr. Shivraj Patil, urged them to proceed with the question hour. He said the hawala issue is being discussed, and they can ask their queries during the debate. When his request was not heeded, the speaker adjourned the house till 1400. When the house reassembled, the scene was no different, as the opposition repeated its demand. They again trooped into the well of the house, shouting slogans. The speaker adjourned the house for the day.

In the Rajya Sabha, the opposition members asked the prime minister, who was present, to inform them about the government's stand on the Supreme Court's direction to the CBI on the hawala issue. The Congress-I members argued that the question hour should not be allowed to go waste. Amid noisy scenes and slogan shouting, the house was adjourned till 1200. When the house reassembled, the mood of the members was different. They bade an emotional farewell to the retiring members. [passage omitted]

India: Rao Views Probe Into Illegal Money Transfer Case

BK0803094396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has asserted that the government never interfered with the CBI

[Central Bureau of Investigation] investigations in the hawala [illegal money transfer] case.

In a brief intervention in the Lok Sabha on the motion on the hawala case and on allegations about illegal payoff to some members of parliament, Mr. Narasimha Rao said the system of not interfering in the investigation will continue and the law will take its own course. Quoting the observations made by the Supreme Court, Mr. Rao said the court is also in agreement with the government's (?feeling) on how the CBI should act. He said the apex court and the high courts of different states have entrusted trials of several cases of different nature like murders, atrocities, police firing on Uttarakhand [agitation for a separate state in Uttar Pradesh] activists and offenses committed by police officers in Haryana to the CBI. He said the apex court and the high courts have ordered the investigating agency to report to them about the progress of such cases. Mr. Rao said the CBI in such cases is reporting directly to these courts and not to the government or any other authority. The prime minister said there is nothing unusual in the CBI reporting to the Supreme Court directly in the hawala case. The prime minister told the house that a detailed reply will be given by his colleague, Mrs. Margaret Alwa, later.

India: Threat of 'Massive' Power Shortages Viewed

BK0803071896 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] More than 9,000 crore rupees worth of central assistance has been sanctioned by the government during the last two years to develop the power sector in the country. This was stated by the power minister, Mr. N.K.P. Salve, while addressing the meeting of the parliamentary consultative committee attached to his ministry. Mr. Salve said that the Power Finance Corporation has recently expanded its list of borrowers to include the private sector. The corporation will extend support to captive and (?coal) generation power projects, which have short gestation period. The measure has been taken to accelerate capacity addition in the power sector.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] Within two months since the Hong Kong-based Gordon Wu got the go-ahead for setting up six power plants in India, the Enron deal is also being renegotiated. Many other power plants are under construction. All these projects will start (?making) electricity only in the next few years, and considering the massive shortage India now faces that truly is an alarming (?thought). All the states are confronted with thousands of megawatts of power shortage in the coming years. Energy is the first and foremost requirement of any industry and this will adversely affect industrial performance in coming years.

[C.P. Jajoo, senior executive president of Vikram Cement] We have closed down one of our units in last two months. We are suffering huge losses only because of shedding of power and bad quality of power.

[Correspondent] These power cuts are going to intensify in the future. Even the common consumer will be faced with long power cuts during the coming summer. Clearly, generators will top the summer shopping list of many households. At the same time, setting up of in-house or captive power plants to counter the future shortage will dominate corporate planning and investments. From being an essential requirement for sectors like steel and cement they are fast becoming a necessity for every manufacturing unit. For a change, companies are no longer looking at in-house plants as additional cost but as a long-term investment. And anyway, setting up of a plant now requires minimum investment as companies can get electricity on build, own, operate and maintain basis.

[A.C. Manocha, director of DLF Power] They buy on build, own, operate, and maintain basis. They're not working or spending energy. They still get power; they are only permitting us to use their place and we shall have the power plant on the other hand. They don't have to make any capital investment. It is we who make the capital investment; we get it financed. Party does not have to get it financed, and they have the full power to them. [sentence as heard]

[Correspondent] The government is also taking steps to encourage companies to generate their own power. While various other sources of energy are being developed, captive power can surely prove to be one of the best options available. [end recording]

India: Commentary Reviews Economic, Trade Ties With EU

BK0803120696 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 8 Mar 96

[Commentary by H.C. Shukla]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] As part of the new Asia strategy, the European Union has launched major initiative aimed at strengthening trade and business ties with India, besides increasing understanding on political and other issues. The foreign ministers of the European troika — Italy, Spain, and Ireland — participating in the discussions in New Delhi recently with the Indian leadership, including Prime Minister Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, and External Affairs Minister Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, conveyed the message that the recently concluded summit of Asia-Europe Meeting, ASEM, at Bangkok seemed incomplete without the participation of India.

The European members strongly backed the case for India's entry into ASEM summit. It is now likely that India would be invited for the second summit scheduled to be held in London in 1998. Several European leaders, including the German chancellor, Mr. Helmut Kohl, has strongly supported India's participation in the next summit. Even the host country, UK, has made it known that India should be invited. It has been stressed that India will become one of the leading economic powers in the beginning of the next century. It has proved its potential, especially after initiating major economic reforms about four and half years ago, opening its frontiers for outside goods and investments.

With the opening of its markets, India is hopeful of gaining enough strength on the trade and economic fronts, so as to gain more respect from the EU. Bilateral trade between India and Europe has grown at a healthy rate of 29 percent during January to October 1995. More importantly, Europe's exports to India have grown at a rate of 32.2 percent during the period and the interest of European Community will intensify if such strengths are sustained. India's trade with Europe has in fact grown faster in the recent years compared to other Asian nations. India's ranking among Europe's trade partners moved up to 19 by the end of 1994 from 25 in 1990. India's market share in Europe also increased from 9.98 percent in 1990 to 1.28 percent in 1994. [figures as heard]. The trend continues and in the period between January and October 1995, India exported goods worth 216.67 billion rupees. However, the balance of trade remained in favor of Europe as Indian imports from Europe amounted to 228.11 billion rupees. EU feels that the importance of India lies in its future potential as she has a vast market for consumer goods.

The European Commission [EC] is planning to improve its trade ties with India through a two-pronged strategy, which comprises publication of a report on India to enhance better awareness about the country, even while deepening and strengthening the current trade cooperation. The vice president of European Commission, Mr. Manuel Marin, said in New Delhi the other day that a new cooperation agreement between India and the EU to promote and upgrade relations between the two was being worked out. A draft of the agreement has been handed over to the Indian Government and a favorable response from New Delhi is expected to be conveyed soon. The report on India is being prepared by Mr. [Erick Muller], deputy head of the EC unit which handles India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka. To be published by the end of this month or beginning of the next, the report will outline details on future areas of cooperation between India and Europe on the economic and trade fronts.

The troika comprising the Italian, Spanish, and Irish foreign ministers and the vice president of the European Commission also took part in the ninth round of political dialogue with India. Mr. Pranab Mukherjee later said that the two sides have identified certain areas of cooperation and have decided to jointly work on the issue of reform in the United Nations. It was also felt that joint action was required in combating the problems of terrorism and drug trafficking, of which India is a victim, courtesy of one of its neighbors. The EU strongly condemned the cross-border terrorism. India also conveyed its reservations about the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty], and [said] in its present form it was discriminatory and tilted toward nuclear-haves countries.

Iran

Iran: Majles Election Voting Begins; President Casts Vote

LD0803062696 Tehran IRNA in English 0556 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 8, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi—Rafsanjani cast his vote few minutes after the ballot polls opened at 8:00 o'clock [0430 GMT] this morning.

The president cast his vote at Jamaran mosque in northern Tehran for the 270-seat Majles.

Tehran constituency will be sending 30 deputies to the Majles and more than 400 are contending for the Tehran seats in the Majles.

A total of 2,946 contenders will be running in today's nation- wide elections, announced the elections headquarters at the Interior Ministry late Thursday [7 March] night.

According to the headquarters 285 contenders have withdrawn their candidacy from the elections.

Of the 2,946 candidates, 2,767 are male and 179 female.

Religious minorities have 18 candidates, of which five will be elected to the Majles.

The elections will be held for at least 10 hours, till 6:00 pm and it will be extended by the interior minister if necessary. bllallots will be cast in 30,000 polling booths throughout the country for 196 constituency.

Iran: Rafsanjani Urges 'Popular' Majles Relying on 'Free Vote'

LD0803102396 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0720 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Announcer] Dear viewers: This is the Jamaran Hoseyniyyeh [Khomeyni's former residence], home to polling station number 121. President Hashemi-Rafsanjani came here at 0850 [0520 GMT] this morning to cast his vote for 30 Tehran constituency candidates. [passage omitted]

Your Excellency Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani: I would like to congratulate you for the staging of the fifth Islamic Majles elections. How many times have you taken part in elections?

[Rafsanjani] I have lost count. I have participated in all the elections we have had since the early days of the revolution.

[Announcer] Have you actually selected the maximum number of 30 candidates?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Yes. I selected the names of 30 candidates after studying various lists of group and independent candidates.

[Announcer] What do you think are the special characteristics of these elections? What are its important features seen from an international perspective?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I see a few new features. One is that there seems to be a greater variety of candidates than the earlier rounds, and this gives people more choice. The second important point is that the elections are taking place at a time when the Americans have increased their propaganda pressures on us under various baseless pretexts. Of course their aim is to dishearten our people. However, past experience shows that this has the opposite effect and our people become even more vigilant.

The other point which is noteworthy is that we are at present on the path of construction and development. The first and second development plans have been approved and a significant momentum has got under way in our country. Cultural, moral, and revolutionary issues have gained a new sensitivity, and this is because we have been pitted against the Americans and the Israelis in a propaganda war. A great deal of vigilance is required in the process of forming the [new] Majles. This should be a strong Majles which ought to bear all these issues in mind. It should also be a popular Majles which should rely completely on people's free vote.

My advice to all the brothers and sisters who serve the people in this capacity [Majles] is that they should be trustworthy deputies. Experiences show that people's votes can be trusted, and we have always benefited from our attention to public opinion. If the Majles fulfils what people have asked for with their votes, then this will certainly be in the interest of the country.

The other interesting feature of these elections is the presence of women. In my opinion, it seems that the women now believe that they can have a serious social presence. Fortunately they have decided to enter the public arena this time in a noteworthy manner. [passage omitted]

Iran: Khamene'i Urges 'No Irregularity' in Election

LD0803113296 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 0715 GMT 8 Mar 96

[Remarks by Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic revolution, in Tehran after casting his vote in 8 March parliamentary elections — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. I pray that the exalted God will bless this day for the Iranian nation. People will be definitely rushing to the voting polls to put their votes in the ballot boxes. This will be one more step toward greater achievements for the Iranian nation. I call on them to be hasty. One must be hasty in doing good deeds. One must be quick in carrying out good deeds. [passage omitted]

Furthermore, when they are marking their vote and putting it in the ballot boxes, they should do it for God. They should have God's approval in mind. I must thank the gentlemen who are responsible for the ballot boxes — both those who have been active in the past several months or those who are going to be busy from now on. I thank them and pray for them.

I also tell them that the ballot boxes are the deposit of the Iranian nation. The ballot boxes are the honor of the Iranian nation. They have been trusted to you and you should look after them with great care, concern, and scrupulousness. The votes should be counted properly and announced to the public as they are. There is no greater expediency. People's votes should be taken out of the ballot boxes and announced. There should be no irregularity. Of course, thank God, there has never been any irregularity and we have had no knowledge of irregularity. Thank God, our elections are among the healthiest and they have always been so.

This is my advice and I hope there will be great care. I thank you gentlemen of the press.

Iran: Voting Process Going 'Smoothly'

*LD0803113796 Tehran IRNA in English
1046 GMT 8 Mar 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 8, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi—Rafsanjani on Friday visited the parliamentary elections headquarters and inspected the process of elections for the 270-seat fifth Majles. Interior minister, 'Ali Mohammad Besharati, briefed the president on the ongoing voting process.

Also, the deputy interior minister in charge of security and information affairs, Gholam Hoseyn Bolandian, told the president that, by midday Friday, no incident causing interruption in the normal process of voting at any polling booths has been reported.

He added that the voting process is going on smoothly, and that the Iranian citizens are voting for their favorite candidates at some 30,000 polling stations throughout the country. Iranian people will send 270 representatives out of 3,232 candidates running for the parliamentary seats to the fifth Majles, to be inaugurated on May 28, 1996.

President Rafsanjani also expressed gratitude over people's massive turnout for the elections. He added that the vigilant Iranian people, through their participation in the parliamentary elections, demonstrated to the enemies of the Islamic revolution that the revolution enjoys solid popular support.

He stressed that the enemies of the Islamic revolution should realize the magnitude of the Iranian people's support for their government and revolution and desist from hatching plots against the Islamic government. Regarding his feeling and attitude toward the ongoing parliamentary elections and the people's participation, the president said, "I am very happy. Compare the parliamentary elections in Iran with those held in other countries. When you observe the people's freedom and their massive turnout and the soundness of elections, you will become happy too."

Iran: Emami-Kashani Urges Vigilance Against Election Irregularity

LD0803110496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0840 GMT 8 Mar 96

[Second Friday sermon by Ayatollah Mohammad Emami-Kashani, senior member of Iran's Guardian Council, at Tehran University — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted]

In the past, Islam used to be almost totally hidden by the dark clouds of tyranny and blasphemy. The banner of Islam was however hoisted in this country. The enemies are aware that this revolution is being carried forward on the shoulders of the Iranian nation. If therefore people did not show enough interest in their important political destiny, the enemy would then believe that one day it would be able to dominate this country, impose its culture on us and exploit our resources. However, with the people's presence, the enemy will realize that it will not be able to do achieve these aims.

It is for this reason that they wage various forms of propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran and level certain false accusations against us. One of these is the charge of support for terrorism. This is despite the fact that America and Zionism themselves, together with the CIA and the other enemies of Islam, are in fact the pillars of world terrorism.

As our eminent leader [Khamene'i] has said, they wage all this propaganda against us in a bid to divert public attention from elections. However, God willing, with the vigilance of this great nation, they will once again be defeated. [crowd chants in support; passage omitted]

There is another point that I want to make. Through great effort and as far as possible the Guardian Council and the Ministry of Interior have managed, thank God, to carry out their official duties. If the credentials of some people were rejected it did not mean they were not suitable for some other work. In fact they might be well suited for other jobs or their credentials might have been rejected without proper cause. There was little time for the reviews. And it is also possible that [some credentials] were approved without proper cause. The great nation of Iran should take care not to think lowly of a person whose credentials have been rejected.

The other point is about the efforts of those who are guarding the election boxes. Although the responsible officials of the Guardian Council, the supervisory body, and the Ministry of Interior know well, I use this sacred Islamic tribune of Friday prayers to say that here lies great responsibility and there is need for vigilance, awareness, impartiality, and guarding of people's vote. They should be careful that votes do not change. They should be careful that there is no irregularity or cheating. It is our grave responsibility to guard the votes while the nation is choosing its trustees. [passage omitted]

Iran: Majles Member Criticizes BBC Treatment of Elections

LD0703161096 Tehran IRNA in English 1515 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Esfahan, March 7, IRNA — Iranian MP at the fourth term of parliament Hasan Kamran whose candidacy has been rejected for the fifth parliamentary elections, here on Thursday protested against distortion of realities by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

The BBC reported in its Persian service on Wednesday [6 March] night that the rejection of Kamran's candidacy has angered and disappointed people of Esfahan.

Kamran told IRNA that according to a legal procedure he was informed that it would be convenient for him not to launch election campaign for the next term of Majles, but that there exists legal channels to follow up the issue.

He said, "I respect the ruling, because the jurisprudents at the Council of Guardians are fair and pious."

The MP of the fourth term of parliament said, "no doubt, the BBC is not sympathetic to the Iranian people and is seeking to dissuade people from turning out in the Friday elections."

He said since the rejection of his candidacy, no illegal gathering or a protest rally has been held and this showed the people's sense of responsibility towards fulfilling their religious duties.

Kamran said he wanted his obedience to the leadership of the Islamic revolution and all-out support of the people, officials and candidates be heared by the world, including the BBC.

He said he might lodge a complaint with Esfahan's court against the BBC reporter.

Following the rejection of his candidacy for the fifth parliament, Kamran had appealed to people to vote for the candidates whose eligibility have been confirmed by the Council of Guardians.

Iran: Rejected Candidates Gather in Front of Guardians' HQ

NC0803114596 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 3 Mar 96 p 2

[From the "For Your Information" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Some candidates whose credentials were rejected have gathered in front of the Council of Guardians' headquarters during the fast few days asking for information on why their eligibility was rejected. A number of Majles deputies whose eligibility was rejected were also seen among them. [passage omitted]

Iran: Rejection of Eligibility of Leftist Candidates Noted

NC0703161496 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 4 Mar 96 pp 1, 14

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—The Secretary of the Islamic Association of University Professors (IAUP), Najafqoli Habibi, speaking to the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview elaborated on the stance of the association of Fifth Majles elections.

The association, a close ally of Majma'-e Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez (MRM), supports the candidates of the Organization of the Islamic Revolution Mojahedin (OIRM), he said, adding this is indeed an informal coalition made up of major leftist groups.

On the rejection of the eligibility of some of the leftist candidates, he said the rejection unfortunately stems from the biased assessment of the screening bodies which are under the influence of the ruling majority group.

The eligibility of a considerable number of the leftist candidates have been rejected in different provinces, he said, the executive and supervisory bodies have not so far given clear-cut reasons for the rejection. [sentence as published]

On the combination of forces in the Fifth Majles, Habibi said that no single group will be able to have a sweeping victory in the coming Majles.

Mostly individuals or hopefuls belonging to different groups, including the Khedmat-gozaran-e Sazandegi (6-G), [Servants of Construction] will enter the Majles. Thus, bringing about a drastic change in the combination of forces, he added.

On the probable victory of the leftists, he said they would not be able to achieve a predominant victory at this stage.

On the evaluation of the leftists of the performance of the present ruling group, he said, they restricted the participation of other groups in various government organs by resorting to various means in the past four years.

Because of the monopoly the ruling group has created, it was not worried about criticism of its policies from any circle. Therefore, it did not endeavor to fulfill several ideals of the Islamic Revolution, Habibi said, adding, economic, cultural and political policies of the ruling group have not been able to fulfill all objectives of the Islamic Revolution as we expected.

He added that the widening gap between the rich and the poor is one of the results of economic liberalization. This policy will prepare a ground for endangering our economic independence, he added.

Social justice means eradication of monopoly from all aspects of society, he stressed.

On the plans of the leftists for the development of the country, Habibi said that the outlines of the plans include reliance on domestic resources and workforce for achieving a self-reliant economy. We do not need foreign investment and fund. Social justice in all its aspects is another fundamental principle that the leftists try to materialize.

On the necessity of formation of political parties to check this monopoly, he said that political parties are unavoidable if we have to safeguard our Revolution.

But certain difficulties may appear in the way of forming parties.

On the economic development and social justice, he said, both the concepts need comprehensive plans in order to be able to respond to the needs of our society.

When we talk of social justice, it should include political participation, Habibi said, adding this is why we need political parties. In the absence of political parties, irresponsible bands come to power and the stands of political bands will remain ambiguous.

If we do not allow political parties it will lead to dictatorship in the long-run. Since our government is religious, the emergence of any kind of dictatorship in our country would deal a strong blow to religion, Habibi concluded.

Najafqoli Habibi, 54, was a member of Parliament in the 3rd Majles. He served as Chancellor of Tarbiyat-e Modarres and Al-Zahra (a) universities [as published]. He was also head of the Department of Law and Political Sciences of Tehran University. Presently he is teaching at the Divinity Department of Tehran University.

Iran: Majles Candidates Express Political Views

LD0403202096 Tehran IRNA in English
1946 GMT 4 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 4, IRNa — Millions of Iranians are expected to go to the polls March 8th for electing candidates of their choice for the fifth Majles, the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran that has regularly convened since 1979.

On Monday afternoon, three of the more than 3,000 candidates for the Legislative Assembly of Iran were interviewed by IRNA. The three, representing different tickets, offered their personal comments to questions posed to them by the agency reporters, the following being excerpts from that interview.

Interview with the representative of the 'Association for Defending Revolution's Values' Mrs Rafat Bayat:

Q. What do you intend to do professionally after you find your way to the Majles?

A. The fifth session of the Majles must do without undue tolerance and must not exploit the Majles as a forum in which to engage in give and take business dealings. The practice of brave and rational confrontation (in the form of debates) should find its way to the Majles. The Majles is not a forum for trial and error. The people did not institute this revolution to win their daily bread, but on the other hand, they should not now have to go to an extreme agony to get that bread. A healthy atmosphere should be created that will be conducive to public participation in the economic affairs of the nation, the social environment will have to encourage investment, the Civil Code of Iran will have to be amended with the women being guaranteed their constitutional rights. The third and the fourth Majles simply overlooked those propositions..."

Observations by candidate on the ticket of the Association of Struggling Ulema Morteza Nabavi:

"Constitutionally, Majles is responsible to monitor the operation of the government. The constitution has even anticipated such devices as questioning public officials, interrogating or impeaching Cabinet ministers, the president, and query into the operation of the three branches of the government.

"The idea of monitoring by the Majles is to ensure social, economic and financial disciplines within the Iranian community. As long as Majles deputies are pious, brave, and hardship-tested, they will not tend to be business brokers and given those conditions are met the Majles will certainly develop into an entity calling for the rule of law.

"The Association of Struggling Ulema has as its motto the social equity, national development, popular participation and overseeing. But construction and development must be in pace with social equity. The association also has as its slogan that of support for President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani which means support for the Cabinet in its effort to perpetuate development concurrent with social equity.

"Within the meaning of development, social equity means better employment rate, a smaller inequality in distribution of wealth. In our judgment, a development conducive of widening class-gap is to be condemned.

"The Association of Struggling Ulema advocates a balanced national budget and a consistent balance of payments, and improvement of incentives in the economic activities. For the time being 80 per cent of the economic structure of the nation is owned and operated by the government. Our association is opposed to recognizing any exclusive business rights for the government or even for the private sector.

Mr Behzad Nabavi on the ticket of 'The Strugglers of the Islamic Revolution Organization'.

"The central motto of The Strugglers of the Islamic Revolution organization is 'protection of national independence and the Islamic culture of the nation, better mass participation (in the economic life of the Iranian society), establishment of the rule of law and justice for all.

"Our programs are conceived with the idea of preventing capitalistic rule on the Iranian society, promoting better policy- making in the interest of the deprived masses, and establishing a national economic order consistent with Articles 43 and 44 of the Constitution..."

"We consider national development as being a component of social equity. Without national development our society will not be able to witness equity... A society without economic production is one in which poverty shall rule..."

Iran: Tehran Mayor—All Parties Should Be Represented in Majles

NC0703153096 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 29 Feb 96 pp 1, 14

[Report by F. Ekhlasi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TEHRAN — "Majles should be made up of representatives of different groups and ideologies; in other words, deputies with various political views and attitudes should be allowed to have seats in the Iranian Parliament", said Tehran Mayor, Gholamhoseyn Karbaschi, in an "interview with the Tehran Times.

Regarding the list of the candidates nominated by Kargozaran-e Sazandegi, Karbaschi [Servants of Construction] said that the list comprises individuals with different views on social, political, economic and cultural issues.

Kargozaran-e Sazandegi does not intend to include only one special group; instead, it intends to cooperate with different political groups and is in favor of a parliament which would admit representatives holding all the existing views in society, he stressed.

Tehran mayor added that Majles, by having deputies with different ideas, will be in touch with the country's political situation and problems of people from all walks of life, and can find appropriate solutions more easily.

On his recent visit to Qom along with Governor of Central Bank of Iran, Mohsen Nurbakhsh, and vice-president heading the Physical Training Organization, Mostafa Hashemi-Taba, to confer with Jame'ye Modarresin (the Instructors' Society) at the Islamic Seminary, he said that the visit was aimed at getting the approval of Jame'ye Modarresin for Kargozaran-e Sazandegi.

Iran: Besharati on 'People's Massive Participation' in Elections

LD0703214996 Tehran IRNA in English 2134 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 7, IRNA — Interior Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati, commenting on the nationwide parliamentary polls to be held tomorrow, said on Thursday that the Iranian nation, which has on different occasions displayed its deep love and support for the Islamic system, will always be there on the scenes.

Besharati in his brief talk with IRNA said that the more experienced and more institutionalized the Islamic revolution has become, the more intense have become the enemies against this divine system.

He pitied the enemies of Iran for trying to misinform world people that the enthusiasm of the Iranian people has diminished compared to the early years of the revolution.

He said the 104 news groups from 70 countries of the world who are in Iran to cover the elections, will once again witness the proud presence of the Iranian people on the election scene.

"The people's massive participation will as usual disappoint the enemies and inject fresh hopes into the hearts of the friends of the Islamic revolution," said Besharati.

Iran: Morteza Alviri Analyzes Upcoming Elections

96LA0137A Tehran ABRAR in Persian 28 Dec 95 p 2

[Report on interview with Morteza Alviri, secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Industrial Commercial Zones, by IRNA; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text]

How the People Will Vote in the Next Election: Voting for the List, Voting Responsibly

Engineer Morteza Alviri, the deputy from Tehran for two terms in the Majles, said: The indices and criteria for selecting Majles deputies have not been described well for the people.

In his opinion, people have expectations of deputies that are by no means among the duties of deputies, and the natural outcome of such a process is that many of the deputies, in order not to lose the Majles seats, try to respond positively to those demands of the people, the result of which is to ignore their main duty as deputies.

Alviri said: All of us have low tolerance and are weak in terms of tolerating each others' views and lack the necessary flexibility in dealing with opposing views and beliefs. This issue has made the political situation of the country inappropriate.

He added: Many of us have gotten into the habit, as soon as a viewpoint contrary to our own is discussed, of placing ourselves in a position of being absolutely right, regarding the other viewpoint as un-Islamic and anti-revolutionary, and trying to drive others out of the scene.

Alviri added in this connection: This problem isolates human beings with character who are not prepared to make a deal about their beliefs for a few days of life and, on the other hand, drag people with no character or identity to flattery and hypocrisy. In other words, they make statements and slogans in which they do not believe.

Morteza Alviri, who at the present is the secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Industrial Commercial Zones of the country, also said in an interview with IRNA: The political climate of the country is inappropriate, and this situation has had an effect on Weakening the parliament, because for this reason many competent and useful people are not inclined to become candidates for Majles deputy.

In regards to the indices for the evaluation of the Majles operation, he said: The volume of bills and proposals examined, the positions of the deputies in regards to the problems in the society, the coherence and maturity of Majles ratifications, and the level of Majles supervision over the operations of the ministries and government organizations are among the criteria for evaluating the operation of the Majles.

The deputy from Tehran to the First and Third Majles explained: When the people feel that the Majles is not the loudspeaker for their opinions and views, their attention to the discussions in the Majles decreases.

Regarding the composition of the Fifth Majles, Eng. Alviri said: The composition of the Fifth Majles will depend on the changes and developments in the political climate which may be created in the remaining time before the elections.

He divided the kind of voting of the people for the Majles candidates into two groups, those who vote for the list and those who vote with awareness and with previous knowledge and added: The closed political conditions will make the type of voting which is for the list more widespread, and ultimately, this will bring weak individuals to the Majles.

Emphasizing the role of the officials and the mass media in holding sound elections, Alviri said: Clarifying the role of the Majles in the regime of the Islamic Republic, the active presence of the organizations and groups in the elections, the fair access of candidates to campaign resources, the fatherly positions of high-ranking personalities of the country, and also the precision of the implemental and supervisory committees at the time of evaluating the candidates and preventing the omission of competent and faithful people can play a determining role in the quality of the Fifth Majles.

In connection with the division in the existing ideologies in the society, he said: During the war and after Bani-Sadr was dismissed, the revolutionary forces were divided into two groups, left and right, but because of the change in conditions, the above divisions have lost their substance to a great extent, even though the forms are still in place and are the basis of judgment.

Alviri said: It seems that with the break in the above forms, another current called the moderate or independent current is taking shape at the present. This movement emphasizes political freedom, social justice, and economic development simultaneously, whereas other movements pay attention at least to one of these factors.

He emphasized: In my opinion, if a sound and correct election is carried out, the moderate faction will be able to receive the highest number of votes, in other words, the faction which is both of the Hezbollah, that is, religious believers in the revolutionary values, and that also believes that a solution must be found in world experience and expert viewpoints.

Regarding the necessity to establish party organizations, he said: In a parliamentary system like Iran's, party organizations and the Majles need each other. In other words, in a country, the Majles cannot have the second legal status, with vast authority, and not be a tool for the selection of deputies, that is, the tool for recognized parties and groups with specific charters and bylaws.

Alviri said: The activities of parties as an inevitable necessity in the society must be noted, and respect for the opinion of others in the country must be institutionalized.

In conclusion, he said: No matter how much we fire up the kiln of the elections and the people have a more active presence in the elections, this action can be more effective in ensuring the Islamic Republic and the political and economic development of the country. In this connection, everyone must come to the scene for a sound and proper election to be held.

Iran: Paper Surveys Foreign 'Propaganda' on Election

LD0703141796 Tehran SALAM in Persian 3 Mar 96 p 9

["Foreign Propaganda and the Elections" — SALAM report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A survey of the items put out in recent weeks by foreign radio stations broadcasting in Persian indicates that the subject of elections is at the top of their list of issues concerning Iran.

Since political stances adopted by Westerners regarding the elections and the active factions in them is of appreciable importance in the assessment of the policies of those factions and since those stances are somehow reflected in the propaganda and method of reporting election developments, we believe the reviewing of foreign propaganda on the threshold of the election to be of great importance, and we will try to bring you, our esteemed readers, the results of our surveys. It must be noted that such opinions cannot be far removed from the superficial and popular understanding which unfortunately are prevalent among some publications and factions.

The following topics have been gathered on the basis of a survey of items from foreign radio stations regarding the elections. In this article direct quotations from the items are worthless because of their huge volume — while the practice is considered as propagating foreign news media. [Therefore] only the result of the analytical surveys are deemed sufficient here. When necessary there will be direct quotes from foreign radios.

The main propaganda lines of foreign radios on the elections are as follows:

There is a likelihood of the right faction losing its majority in the elections.

Loss of majority by the traditional right faction does not mean the left faction gaining power.

There is a serious likelihood of the Servants [of Construction] group — the president's group — succeeding in the elections.

The right faction has not been so successful in managing the country's economy.

Giving importance to the coalition of the servants [of Construction] with other formations such as the Labor House as the strongest labor formation in Iran.

The importance of election results in Tehran and the point that the election [outcome] is determined by the political alignment of voters in Tehran.

Giving importance to a split in the right faction and the point that competition between the traditional right and the modern right has strangely and suddenly heated up the election scene because of the emergence of the Servants [of Construction].

Considering the emergence of the Servants as positive.

In connection with the above issue, the [BBC] London radio, quoting one of its political analysts, says: "The appearance of a faction, which from now on is going to be identified as the Construction Executors, is important because it will reshape the Iranian political arena. That is, before the emergence of this group it was thought that a ruling faction was in control of all the affairs and was going to increase its control: In other words, the said faction was thought to be in control of the Majles and presidency. It is natural that such assumptions were discouraging other factions from entering the political arena. The other factions were in a way disappointed and it seemed as if the whole process before the fourth-term elections was going to repeat itself. However, since some of the ministers and vice presidents entered the arena, the process was interpreted as some sort of rift in the right faction. This brought a new impetus to the political arena and encouraged other factions to take part. At the same time it undermined the monopoly of the right faction." [passage omitted]

A high degree of importance and sensitivity is attached to the Freedom Movement and whether their candidates are rejected after the screening process (In this connection some members of the Freedom Movement were interviewed by foreign radio stations, and top priority was given to the issue of their eligibility).

About endorsing the eligibility of several candidates of the Freedom [Movement], London Radio says: "This could be a new tactic. That is, on the one hand the Guardian Council could decide to leave the control of the Majles in the hands of the faction it supports. On the other hand, it can pretend inside the country and to the observers abroad that members of the opposition also have the chance of entering the Majles. Whereas in reality such a low number of opposition deputies in the Majles would not solve any of the problems in Iran."

In this same connection, the German radio says: "President Rafsanjani delivered a speech, addressing a large audience in Tehran last January, and announced that the forthcoming elections on 8 March would be free and comprehensive. Mr. Rafsanjani's speech made some people believe that Iran was going to start a new political chapter through the forthcoming Majles elections. Mr. Rafsanjani's audience thought that 17 years after the Islamic revolution, the era of liberalization that the people were awaiting had begun. The people of Iran assumed that for the first time some candidates, who are not affiliated to any of the Islamic factions, would go to the Majles. However, shortly before the Fifth Majles elections, in the wake of the recent developments, the people realized that the truth was something else. It seems in Iran the political battle between the politicians supporting Mr. Rafsanjani's faction and the religious fanatics is still going on. And no doubt this will be the main subject in the course of the elections." [passage omitted]

Special importance is attached to participation of the newly established factions in the elections. It is said that these factions, whether affiliated to the government or the state, would influence the creation of political diversity in Iran.

Coverage of the diverse press reports and other official news sources of the country, without adopting any particular stance.

It can be concluded that during the past few weeks, foreign radio stations have broadcast various reports on the forthcoming Majles elections, which naturally have covered the analyses within the framework of their political interests. Apart from showing sensitivity toward possible rejection of Freedom Movement candidates and curiosity toward future prospects of the Servants of Construction, these radios have not shown much interest in other competing factions [passage omitted]

Iran: Paper on Khamene'i Office Member at Scrutiny Meeting

LD0803121696 Tehran SALAM in Persian 5 Mar 96 p 2

["The Leader of the Revolution Has Not Issued Any Order Regarding the Rejection or Acceptance of Election Candidates" — SALAM report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran, IRNA: The office of the eminent leader [Khamene'i] has issued a statement announcing: No instructions have been issued by the eminent leader concerning the approval or rejection of candidates for the fifth Majles election.

The text of the statement is as follows:

"In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. With the announcement of the final list of the candidates for the fifth Majles elections, certain rumors have been spread by the rivals and competitors of the rejected candidates suggesting that the rejections have been based on recommendations by the eminent leader. This office would like to inform the public that no instructions have been issued by the exalted leader regarding the approval or rejection of the election candidates. Obviously, those responsible for spreading such rumors will be legally pursued."

It is noteworthy that in its last issue, the KEYHAN-E HAVA'I [airmail KEYHAN] weekly published a report saying that a member of the leadership office has been attending the Guardian Council's meetings which were to to decide the eligibility of election candidates. The weekly's report said: Following remarks by his eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i about the need to create suitable grounds for the participation of all revolutionary forces in the elections, Hojjat ol-Eslam Hejazi has been one of the fixed attendants at the Guardian Council's discussion sessions about the eligibility of candidates. KEYHAN-E HAVA'I added: Political experts believe that the presence of a member of the eminent leader's office [in the meeting] has caused an increase in the exchange of opinions between the Guardian Council members and has also brought about greater moderation in the way that decisions have been adopted regarding some candidates.

Iran: Former Minister on Islamic Revolution Mojahedin's Views

NC0703162096 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 29 Feb 96 pp 1, 14

[Report by Majid Aqazadeh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TEHRAN — Iran's former Minister of Heavy Industries, Behzad Nabavi, elaborated the views of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Mojahedin Organization (IRIMO) about the forthcoming Majles elections in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times.

"A couple of days ago, it was supposed that a combination of different parties would share the Fifth Majles seats and no monopoly would be felt. However, due to recent movements by the present parties, it is my feeling that the next Majles will be dominated by a certain party. That is to say, the next Parliament is going to be monopolized," he said.

He added that the emergence of new coalitions and political groups like Kargozaran-e Sazandegi [Servants of Construction] as well as nomination of leading figures of the country by these groups, the combination of the Fifth Majles will be different from what it seemed to be earlier.

Asked about the IRIMO's agenda for political, economic, social and cultural affairs of the country, Nabavi referred to 'Asr-e Ma, No. 35 (the weekly published by IRIMO) saying the organization's agenda consists of three mottos: freedom, independence and social justice.

He referred to freedom as participation of people in civil and foreign affairs of the country and rule of law.

Independence, he said, is "Maintaining the Islamic and widely-accepted identity of the revolution and system."

Nabavi outlined social justice as safeguarding the oppressed against the oppressor and opposing. It entails opposition to hegemony of capitalism and economic adjustment policy, he said adding economic development plans should be formulated in a manner to lead to self-reliance and social justice.

"As Article 44 of the constitution states, the organization advocates a mixed economy in which every economic activity is controlled. To increase gross national product (GNP), the government should allot facilities to sectors it deems necessary for the country' development," added Nabavi.

"In 1991, I wrote to President Hashemi-Rafsanjani and warned him against his economic policies. I asked him to follow protectionism instead of pursuing privatization," added Nabavi.

He said various groups advocate different policies for economic, political and social development. Some neglect social justice, others ignore development for the sake of justice. "IRIMO believes that development and justice go hand in hand.

Referring to the statistics released by the Central Bank of Iran, Nabavi compared gross national product, per capita income and inflation rates between the years 1982-1986 and 1989-1993 and concluded that the ratio of investment to the GDP when he was in charge of the Heavy Industry Ministry was 20 to 1 while according to available data the figure stood at 15 in 1989-1993. As for the rate of inflation, he continued, the rate was 12.8 for the years 1982-1986 and 18 for the latter.

Born in 1942 Behzad Nabavi entered the University of Amir Kabir in 1960 and graduated in 1964. He majored in electronics. After the Revolution he served in Central Committee of the Islamic Revolution.

He was appointed as Minister of Heavy Industries in 1982 and remained in the post until 1989. He is a senior member of the IRIMO.

Iran: Commentary on Qualities Needed for Fifth Majles Deputies

LD0703193496 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 3 Mar 96 p 16

[Unattributed commentary: "Clergy and the Monopoly of Values"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The history of accusing the clergy of "monopolism" is as long as the history of the Islamic revolution. If before the victory the clergy were accused of "dogmatism" and "closed mindedness," this accusation developed to "monopolism" after the revolution. [passage omitted]

Under the current circumstances when the domineering America is constantly bearing its teeth at the Islamic Republic of Iran and threatening it, our people expect the clergy not to buckle under the accusation of monopolism and not abandon the arena in the formulation and crystallization of Islamic values, especially in the fight against the world-devouring America; otherwise, the enemy will meet its objective. In this critical time when our people are going through the election period, the honorable clergy should undertake wholeheartedly the task of guiding and directing the people and help them to understand the advice of the late imam and His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i. God willing "faithful," "brave," and "revolutionary" deputies who support the line of the guardianship of the supreme jurisconsult [velayat-e faqih], who have felt the American crimes alongside the people and who under any circumstances would not accept a reconciliation with America, will enter the fifth Majles.

Iran: 'Wrong Policy' Places Israelis in 'Trap'

LD0703164396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 7 Mar 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Palestine resistance movement, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], announced a halt in martyrdom-seeking operations against the Zionist regime till July. The announcement came on the 5 March and according to German News Agency, the proposal was announced in the segment released by the 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, the military wing of Hamas, under condition that Israel will not harm Hamas activists.

According to political experts, prior to the martyrdom of Dr Fathi al-Shaqaqi and assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash, the situation in the occupied territories was in a manner that it seemed that Hamas movement had adopted a peaceful policy. But assassination of the leader of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad by Mosad and the Zionist regime officials' expression of satisfaction, including former premier of the Zionist regime, concerning these events affected the feelings of the Palestinian people. The peak of these feelings as well as the wrath and anger of the people of Palestine of the Zionist regime terrorist acts manifested in the course of the funeral ceremony of Yahya 'Ayyash. In the ceremonies over half a million Palestinians had participated. According to observers carrying out martyrdom-seeking anti-Zionist operations under such conditions was quite predictable.

And now, in view of the declaration of cease-fire by Hamas, the Zionist regime officials are now faced with this question: Will they continue with the suppression policy? Spokesman of the Zionist regime cabinet gave a positive response to this question in an interview with the BBC television. He laid emphasis on the Zionist regime's old policy of terrorist operations. In this regard, formation of terrorist networks, assassination and arrest of those suspected of cooperating with Hamas have been placed within the agenda of this regime. This only leads to further anger and violence.

According to analysts, the Zionist regime's wrong policy will put them in a trap to which there is no relief. Concurrent with the wave of arrest and suppression of Palestinians, the imperialist media, especially the Zionist propaganda networks, intend to pretend that the Zionists are wronged and in this manner try to attract support for the new procedure of suppression of Hamas and the people of Palestine. And the declaration of cease-fire by the Hamas movement brings up a question in the public opinion: Will continued policy of suppression bring an end to martyrdom-seeking operations?

Iran: Zarif Faults West's 'Selective' Approach to Terrorism Issue

LD0703172796 Tehran IRNA in English
1608 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 7, IRNA — Deputy foreign minister for international and legal affairs, Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif on Thursday strongly rejected any connection between Iran and recent events in the occupied Palestine.

Zarif, speaking to Tehran-based ambassadors of the European Union (EU), Japan, Australia, Canada and New Zealand also criticized the "double standard and selective" approach of the West and the international community to the issue of terrorism.

Zarif said that based on its Islamic beliefs and political principles, the Islamic Republic of Iran, as one of the biggest victims of international terrorism, has time and again announced its readiness for talks and cooperation aimed at finding a comprehensive mechanism for fighting the phenomenum of terrorism without any selective approach.

However, he added, Iran has not seen any serious move on the part of other countries.

Unfortunately, regretted Zarif, in view of their double standard and selective approach, powerful countries were misusing the issue of terrorism as a political leverage against independent countries, which are not willing to bow to the policies dictated by the powerful states.

He categorically refuted as "unfounded" the allegations of American and Israeli officials on Iran's involvement or financial support in recent events in the occupied Palestine.

He said the problems facing the compromising trend stemmed from the failure of the peace plan to address the root causes of the Palestinian issue or vindicate the rights of the Palestinian nation.

Zarif said that recent events originated from the Zionist regime's policies and behaviour and that the Zionist regime's attempts to blame others for the incidents are futile and due to its internal problems.

Moreover, Zarif said the fact that certain Western officials have based their claims on some IRNA reports and have alleged that those reports reflected the official stance of the Islamic republic were surprising and unacceptable.

The deputy foreign minister also said that the United States and the Zionist regime are the main causes of state terrorism in the world.

Iran: Daily Scores Turkish Government's Stand on Iran

NC0303083896 Tehran RESALAT in Persian
18 Feb 96 p 16

[Political commentary: "A Protest That Is Not Justified"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday the Turkish Government protested the anti-Turkish demonstrations in front of the Turkish Embassy in Tehran. The Turkish foreign ministry summoned the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran and handed an official note of protest to him.

Ankara's protest of the anti-Turkish demonstrations and against the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not justified. Turkish citizens living in Iran demonstrated in defense of their Islamic thoughts and against the infiltration of Zionism and the domination of secularism. These two anti-Islamic platforms are linked together in the artificial and short history of modern Turkey, and dependent political figures have played the most major role in this wretched alliance. The Muslim people of Turkey have the right to protest against those who have imposed these two flimsy and foreign ideas on their fates. It is the definite right of each Muslim to rise up against wretched domination. The truth is that "the eastern secularist alliance" directed by Jewish Salonica [Kamal Ataturk's birthplace] played a major role in the formation of secularist Turkey, and since the era of Ataturk, founder of modern Turkey, what the Zionists have always expected the secularist government to do has been to show flexibility vis-a-vis Zionist infiltration and guidance.

But if some of the heads of secularist Turkey consider themselves duty-bound to carry out this historic role, this is not in any way representative of the true wishes of the people. Zionism's increasing mischief, the inefficiency of the broken arrow of secularism, the growing religious awareness of the Muslims in Turkey, and the increasing awareness of the people of political Islam and of major political problems, have made Turkish society sensitive toward developments. The Islamic Welfare Party with its anti-alien, anti-Zionist, and anti-secularist policies has been able—for the first time in 73 years—to emerge on top of party rivalries. Actually it has been the people's hatred toward the dependent and flimsy political system that has been unable to answer the fundamental needs of society which have accelerated the return to their origin. The downfall of Tansu Ciller's government is one of the initial manifestations of this reality. Any Turkish politician who shows increasing support for secularism and Zionism and the alliance of these two, will not have a better fate.

The other issue is the inopportune expectations that the Turkish officials have of their Iranian counterparts. Last week, with the permission of the Turkish Government and for the first time since the Islamic Revolution, some members of the terrorist monafeqin [hypocrites—pejorative for the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization] resorted to a series of ugly acts in front of the Islamic Republic's Embassy in front of the eyes of the Turkish security officials. A major part of the world is aware of the terrorist nature of the monafeqin. Thus, Ankara's green light to them was contrary to international norms and good-neighborly conduct. Ciller's Government granted the permission to the opponents of the Islamic Revolution to carry out such acts. But now it has raised its voice of protest against the just demonstrations by a number of its own citizens in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran: Tehran Views DYP-ANAP Coalition in Turkey

NC0503192896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 4 Mar 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The political party leaders in Turkey tried unsuccessfully to establish a coalition during the past two months. However, news agencies have reported that the Motherland Party [ANAP] and the True Path Party [DYP] signed a protocol to establish a coalition on 3 March. ANAP leader Mesut Yilmaz will serve as the prime minister until the end of 1997. DYP leader Tansu Ciller will take over the prime ministers office for two years in 1998. A third person will be appointed [words indistinct].

The signing of the protocol will end the political crisis in Turkey. However, some political observers have said that they are skeptical of the coalition government that will be established by Mesut Yilmaz and Tansu Ciller. The two party leaders held many rounds of talks in the past. But, they failed to agree to cooperate. That was due to their differences and personal rivalry.

Nevertheless, it was obvious that the pressure of political, military, and economic circles would force the two leaders to agree to establish a coalition that would satisfy the secular and capitalist forces in Turkey.

Although the DYP and the ANAP will establish a coalition government, Turkey will continue to be confronted with difficult problems in the political and economic fields. For example, Ankara will be preoccupied with the situation of the Kurdish people in southeastern Turkey, the dispute between Turkey and Greece on the [words indistinct] and several islets in the Aegean Sea, and the sharing of the transnational waters of the Euphrates between Turkey, Syria, and Iraq.

Meanwhile, it must be noted that the Welfare Party [RP] is the strongest political party in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. The secular DYP and ANAP will have to secure the support of a third party to guarantee the National Assembly's vote of confidence. The two political parties hope that they will be supported by the Democratic Left Party, which is headed by Bulent Ecevit. The secular parties are seriously worried about the support the RP will get from the electorate during the next general elections.

Iran: Daily Says Afghanistan Needs 'New Vision'

LD0503113896 Tehran IRNA in English 1055 GMT 5 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 5, IRNA — A morning daily Tuesday editorialized on the Afghan

President Borhanoddin Rabbani's visit to Iran saying, it is more than four years that the once fiercely independent guerrillas have turned the guns against each other in a destructive power struggle.

Some 10 separate factions are involved in the civil war with the Taliban group being the latest, irritatingly rigid and with hitherto unknown roots and realities, the English daily 'KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL' stated adding, all peace efforts have either collapsed or were rejected by one group or another because they did not address their 'specific interest'.

"All the players in the Afghan arena should realize that any change in the power structure must come through consensus and dialog," it underlined.

As impoverished Afghanistan sinks deeper into the quagmire of a forgotten war, many friendly nations and governments have started disregarding the plight of the Afghan masses, it said adding, that country's inexhaustible will to continue may be its greatest strength.

Afghanistan, more than anything else, needs a new vision, whether it likes it or not, the editorial concluded.

Iran: Bosnian Premier Praises Tehran's 'Vital' Aid During War

LD0203145396 Tehran IRNA in English
1430 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 2, IRNA — The Bosnian prime minister, Hasan Muratovic, has said the role of Iran's humanitarian assistance to Bosnia-Herzegovina in different sensitive stages of war in his country have proved to be vital and decisive.

In an interveiw with IRNA, the Bosnian premier referred to the effective assistance of Iran during the war and said when no other countires were willing to help Bosnia, the Islamic Republic of Iran granted its invaluble assistance to Bosnia particularly to the city of Bihac which saved their residents from starvation.

Pointing to his forthcoming visit to Iran, Muratovic said the visit is aimed at further expanding bilateral ties and also using Iran's experience in post-war reconstruction projects.

Expessing satisfaction that his first official foreign visit as Bosnian premier will be made to Iran, he hoped that the visit will lead to important agreements between the two countries.

He also said in spite of certain foreign pressures on Bosnia against its good relations with Iran, Bosnia will never disturb its ties with Iran as a friendly country all along the decisive stages of the war in that Balkan state.

Iran: Bosnian Prime Minister Welcomed by First Vice-President

LD0303111496 Tehran IRNA in English
0912 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 3, IRNA — The visiting Bosnian Prime Minister Hasan Muratovic was welcomed by First Vice-President Hasan Habibi at Sa'dabad Palace Here Sunday morning.

In an interview with reporters, Muratovic said that he is to discuss with Iranian officials Tehran-Sarajevo ties in the post-war era.

He said implementation of the peace plan and settling economic and social problems, are the main problems of the Bosnian people. The Bosnian Government is planning talks with officials of the Islamic countries to seek their assistance in reconstructing Bosnia, he added.

Meetings are to be held in Sarajevo and Islamabad to accelerate the trend of Bosnian reconstruction effort, he also said that in the light of Iran's influence and role, positive results are expected.

Terming the Dayton peace plan as unjust but better than war, Muratovic expressed hope that all its paragraphs will be implemented harmoniously in order to reach a durable peace.

He said that part of the Dayton accord dealing with observation of human rights and punishment of the war criminals could not be carried out mainly because sufficient means have not been provided in the plan for their implementation.

On reconstruction of the war-torn country, the Bosnian prime minister said promises and commitments of the world towards Bosnia are doubted.

He added that contrary to many political pledges not much has been forthcoming in this respect.

Muratovic lauded the assistance rendered by the Iranian nation and government both during and after the Bosnian war.

Habibi speaking to reporters stressed that Iran will assist Bosnian reconstruction efforts. He added that now that conditions have improved in Bosnia, Iran will continue its assistance to the Bosnian Muslims and will work to expand its cooperation.

Grounds for Tehran-Sarajevo cooperation are very broad and all relevant issues will be reviewed during the current visit to Tehran of the Bosnian prime minister, he said.

The Bosnian prime minister visited the mausoleum of the late founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Imam

Khomeyni, in southern Tehran and laid wreaths of flowers.

Muratovic arrived here Saturday night on a 3-day official visit.

Iran: Rafsanjani Meets Bosnia's Muratovic, Promises Aid

LD0303115996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani received Hasan Muratovic, prime minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina, today.

Mr. Muratovic thanked the Government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the humanitarian assistance they gave to the Muslim people of Bosnia. He said: This assistance was received at a crucial and sensitive point in Bosnia's history, when the Islamic identity of its people was in danger. Our people will never forget the importance of this deed.

The Bosnian prime minister briefed President Hashemi-Rafsanjani on the latest political, military, and social situation of the Balkans following the Bosnian peace agreement. He said: The people of Bosnia-Herzegovina believe that they have found their identity under the auspices of Islam. They have decided to reconstruct the country after the restoration of relative calm in the region and expect Islamic countries — especially the Islamic Republic of Iran — to assist them during the period of reconstruction, just as they assisted the oppressed people of Bosnia during the period of defense.

He also called for the expansion of economic cooperation with Iran and for benefiting from our country's valuable experience in the field of reconstruction and in helping households that have survived the war but lost their breadwinners.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, for his part, said that Iran is ready to participate in Bosnia-Herzegovina's reconstruction. He said: The survival of Bosnia in the region as a Muslim country is of great importance to the world of Islam, and Islamic countries should stand alongside the people of Bosnia during the period of reconstruction, just as they did during the period of war.

The president stressed the need for the maintenance and strengthening of unity and internal solidarity in Bosnia, adding: Just as this unity was vital and destiny-making in the era when the aggressors were being confronted, it is equally important in the era of peace and reconstruction. Bosnia should, while preserving and strengthening its relations with Islamic countries, benefit from their participation in the era of peace and reconstruction. He said: Helping the suffering people of Bosnia-Herzegovina should not be motivated by greed for profit and opportunism. The motivation should be to reconstruct a country which was subjected to one of the most savage and biggest oppressions in history.

Iran: Habibi Meets With Bosnia's Muratovic, To Visit Sarajevo

LD0303154396 Tehran IRNA in English 1519 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 3, IRNA — First Vice-President Hasan Habibi and Bosnian Premier Hasan Muratovic met and conferred here on Sunday [3 March].

Muratovic briefed Habibi on latest political, economic and international developments relating to Bosnia and discussed with him expansion of Tehran-Sarajevo cooperation.

He invited Habibi to pay an official visit to Sarajevo which was accepted.

Habibi lauded the Bosnian people for their struggles and called on them to maintain patience and tolerance in the era of reconstruction.

He underlined the need for preservation of unity among the Bosnian nation and stressed Iran's interest in expanding mutual cooperation and in offering assistance to Bosnia.

Muratovic arrived here on Saturday to hold talks with Iranian officials.

Iran: Habibi Hold More Talks With Visiting Bosnian Prime Minister

LD0303231496 Tehran IRNA in English 2255 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 3, IRNA — First Vice-President Hasan Habibi and Bosnian Prime Minister Hasan Muratovic in their second round of talks here on Sunday exchanged views on important bilateral and regional issues.

Muratovic thanked the Iranian Government and nation on behalf of the Bosnian nation and government, for providing humanitarian assistance to his country during its struggles and reconstruction.

He said Iran's assistance to the republic has always been unconditional and that Bosnians call on the Iranian Government and nation to continue their support, especiallly in the tough conditions of the reconstruction era.

Referring to the importance of Iran's contribution to reconstruction of plants and implementation of infrastructural projects in Bosnia, Muratovic said that besides economic ties his country was interested in expanding its technical and cultural cooperation with Iran.

He referred to Iran as Bosnia's major economic partner and called for Iran's active presence on Bosnia's economic scenes, especially in the area of port building.

He also called for setting up a joint foundation for dealing with the affairs of the families of Bosnian martyrs and disabled combatants, on the models of similar Iranian foundations which look after the disabled and the bereaved families.

Habibi expressed satisfaction with restoration of tranquility in Bosnia and hoped for positive results for the Bosnian nation.

He announced Iran's readiness for expansion of cooperation in the economic, political and cultural spheres.

Habibi also considered it as "necessary" the setting up of a joint bank for building more trust in joint investments and to facilitate the activities of the private sectors and entrepreneurs of the two countries on each other's soil.

On the issue of affairs of families of martyrs and combatants, he said Bosnian officials could adopt proper measures in this regard through friendly cooperation and by utilizing the experiences of Muslim states.

He called for cooperation and coordination among Muslim countries for the reconstruction of Bosnia.

Iran: Ambassador Denies Presence of Bosnian Forces in Iran

NC0803120096 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 5 Mar 96 pp 1, 14

[TEHRAN TIMES Service report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TEHRAN — The Bosnian Ambassador to Tehran, Omer Behmen, here yesterday said that no Bosnian troops are receiving trainings Iran. [sentence as published]

Speaking to the TEHRAN TIMES, the ambassador said that there was no evidence proving that the Bosnian troops are receiving training here.

The AFP quoted the NEW YORK TIMES as saying Monday that the Bosnian government sent troops to Iran for training in a bid to upgrade its military.

"To my knowledge there are no Bosnian troops in Iran," he said, adding that the main aim of such baseless propaganda by U. S. media is to spread rumors.

Meanwhile, an informed source at Iran's Foreign Ministry who spoke to the TEHRAN TIMES on the condition of anonymity strongly rejected the report as baseless and unfounded.

The main purpose of U.S. baseless propaganda against Iran in this regard is to weaken Iran's humanitarian aid to Bosnia which did stop throughout the war.

Iran has no military cooperation with Bosnia at present, he said, adding, of course Iran would extend all sorts of possible humanitarian assistances to Bosnia

Iran: Bosnian Prime Minister on Western Failures

LD0503094496 Tehran IRNA in English 0720 GMT 5 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Zagreb, March 5, IRNA — Bosnian Prime Minister Hasan Muratovic said here Monday that western countries have so far failed to fulfill what they promised to undertake under the Bosnian peace plan.

In an interview with IRNA after returning from Tehran, Muratovic stressed that the Bosnian Government accepted the peace plan on the condition that western countries abided by their obligations.

He mentioned economic assistance and the establishment of military balance in the region, as well as the provision of military equipment and training to the Bosnian Army within the framework of the peace plan as among these obligations.

Stressing friendly ties with Islamic and Western countries, he said the Bosnian Government has adopted an independent foreign policy that supports democracy and that it does not consider any limitations on its foreign relations with other countries.

He praised Iran's assistance, noting that when no country was ready to help Bosnia, the Iranian nation and government unconditionally rendered their assistance to ensure Bosnia's survival.

He referred to religious and long historical ties as the main factors that encouraged close links between the the Islamic Republic and Bosnia, stressing that no country can mar these friendly relations.

Muratovic termed his visit to Tehran as very successful and said that economic agreements have been concluded, including Iran's participation in Bosnian reconstruction, the establishment of Iran's economic bureau in Sarajevo, joint economic investments, utilization of Iran's experiences in taking care of the families of Bosnian martyrs and the setting up of a joint bank.

He acknowledged that there are problems on the way of the formation of a Muslim-Croat Federation due to the continuing presence of war criminals in the region and the role of the mafia.

Muratovic during his three-day official visit to Tehran met with President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani and first vice-president Hasan Habibi.

Iran: Daily Says Bosnian Peace Process Precarious

LD0503093696 Tehran IRNA in English 0650 GMT 5 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Iran, March 5, IRNA — The process of reconstruction in Bosnia is facing a major threat as once again, the forces that committed the most heinous crimes against humanity are at work in that country, underscored the English daily "TEHRAN TIMES" in its editorial on Tuesday.

While the Dayton Peace Accord has given the right to Muslims and Croats to return to their homes, the U.N. however, has reported that rebel serbs are forcing thousands of people to surrender their homes in a fresh wave of "ethnic cleansing", citing incidents in Northern Bosnia and Banja Luka.

"In another move, hardline Serb authorities have hastened the exodus of Serbs from five Sarajevo districts due to be returned to the Muslim-Croat federation," it wrote, adding that such actions naturally aggravate the circumstances of the returnees and intensify the crisis.

A full implementation of the Dayton Agreement can prepare the ground for Bosnia's reconstruction, the article stressed but lamented that the U.S., the main sponsor of the accord, has been preparing the ground to justify a possible failure of peace in the Balkans.

Instead of attempting to spot major threats to peace in Bosnia, "U.S. officials and media are trying to disseminate the misinformation that Iran is militarily involved in Bosnia." Such claims have been debunked by Bosnian Prime Minister Hasan Muratovic who emphasized during his visit to Iran that Bosnia's reconstruction was its most urgent need, added the editorial.

It concluded by lauding the U.N. war crimes tribunal for trying leading Bosnian Serb criminals for their brutal crimes against humanity but underlined that if the Dayton Peace Accord is to be a success, other notorious Serbs should also go on trial.

Iran: Reports on Iran's Military Involvement in Bosnia Scored

NC0803115796 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 5 Mar 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Whence Is the Threat to Bosnia's Peace?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Once again the forces that committed the most heinous crimes against humanity are at work in Bosnia. This is the major threat to the process of reconstruction in Bosnia. What Bosnia needs today is the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Accord which can prepare the ground for the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country.

But unfortunately the U.S., the main sponsor of the Dayton Peace Accord, instead of attempting to spot major threats to the peace in Bosnia, tries to point a finger in order to prepare the ground to justify a probable failure of peace in the Balkans.

U.S. officials and media are trying to disseminate the misinformation that Iran is militarily involved in Bosnia. Fortunately, during the visit of Bosnian Prime Minister Hasan Muratovic to Iran, both countries stressed that Bosnia's reconstruction was its most urgent need. Iran is prepared to extend all possible assistance in order to facilitate the pace of reconstruction in Bosnia.

According to the UN, Muslims and Croats are being expelled from their homes in northern Bosnia in a fresh wave of "ethnic cleansing"—a term used by some criminal Serbs to justify the genocide of the Muslims in the Balkans.

According to Alexander Ivanko, spokesman for the UN International Police Task Force (IPTF), rebel Serbs recently arriving in Banja Luka from Sarajevo, are forcing Muslims and Croats to leave their homes. Ironically, Banja Luka has turned into a center of the most brutal crimes committed against humanity, where thousands of innocent people were forced to surrender their homes and hearths.

Some recent developments are alarming. Serb police and civilians late last month began blocking Muslim and Croat civilians from returning to their homes. The Dayton agreement, however, provides that Muslims and Croats have the right to return to their homes.

In another move, hardline Serb authorities have hastened the exodus of Serbs from five Sarajevo districts due to be returned to the control of the Muslim-Croat Federation. Such moves naturally aggravate the circumstances of the returnees and cause a further crisis.

The UN war crimes tribunal should be lauded for trying Bosnian Serb General Djordje Djukic and his Deputy Colonel Aleksa Krsmanovic who were moved to The Hague by Bosnian police. One of the surest ways, however, to the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Accord is the trial of other notorious criminal Serbs. If they are not taken to book, they will try to sabotage the agreement.

Iran: Justice Minister Meets With Russian Counterpart

LD0203113296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The first round of official talks between the Iranian and Russian justice ministers began in Tehran today. Both sides emphasized the expansion of bilateral legal and economic ties.

The justice ministers of Iran and Russia signed a draft agreement on safeguarding the rights of Iranian and Russian nationals residing in each other's country.

The final text of the agreement will be signed by the two sides after the completion of final reviews by relevant experts.

Iran: Government, Russia To Sign Agreement on Legal Cooperation

LD0203141296 Tehran IRNA in English 1334 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 2, IRNA — Russian Minister of Justice Valentin Kovalev said here on Saturday that he has been assigned by Russian President Boris Yeltsin to sign a legal agreement with his Iranian counterpart, Hojjat ol-Eslam Esma'il Shushtari.

In a meeting with head of the judiciary, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, Kovalev said signing the legal agreement with Iran showed that Russia believes that human rights are respected in Iran and religious minorities enjoy the same rights as the other Muslim people in Iran.

He said the agreement would serve the interests of the two countries and would develop bilateral relations in all areas.

Kovalev said the legal cooperation between Iran and Russia would pave the way for signing of other agreements in other sectors.

Ayatollah Yazdi for his part said in the Islamic Republic, the legislation are on the basis of Islamic criteria and that Islam gives equal rights to all divine religions and religious schools of thought.

He said that people in all countries are divided according to their religion, race and position, but, in Islam, the dignity of human being is considered above all regardless of their affiliation to certain religion or race.

Ayatollah Yazdi said in the today's world, the issue of human rights has been turned to a political means to exert pressure on other country and such a misuse by the global arrogance is a great insult to the human rights.

Ayatollah Yazdi said, "I, as the head of the judiciary proclaim that the human rights are not honoured in any part of the world so highly as they are observed in Iran."

The head of the judiciary said legal cooperation between Iran and Russia would develop bilateral relations in political, economic and cultural areas.

Kovalev awarded Ayatollah Yazdi with Koniev Medal, the highest medal of merit on law in Russia.

Koniev has been the founder of law in Russia before the 1917 revolution in Russia.

Iran: Russian Justice Minister Confers With Chief Justice

LD0203154996 Tehran IRNA in English 1534 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Mar. 2, IRNA — The visiting Russian justice minister, Valentin Kovalev, in a meeting on Saturday with the Iranian chief justice said Russia seeks expansion of all-out ties with Iran.

He added that Russia's stance towards Iran in all international fora is independent and his country has proved to be Iran's friend through its support for the Islamic revolution.

The Russian minister also noted that during his visit, an agreement on mutual legal cooperation is to be signed with Iran as a country which supports human and religious minority rights.

Kovalev said that according to the proposed agreement, Iranians living in Russia and also Russians who are residing in Iran will enjoy full civil rights in respective countries.

Meanwhile, the chief justice Ayatollah Mohammadi Gilani [name as received] said in the meeting that Iran and Russia shared common stands notably on regional affairs.

Referring to the historical, friendly ties between Iran and Russia, Ayatollah Gilani noted that good-will combined with reciprocal visits would help solidify such relations.

He also said Russia has proved that it will never give in to U.S. pressures and that the two countries shared common views on Washington's bullyings.

Ayatollah Gilani called for promotion of legal relations between Iran and Russia at university levels.

Meanwhile, the Russian minister invited the Iranian chief justice to pay an official visit to Moscow.

Kovalev presented Russia's highest medal of justice to Ayatollah Gilani as the most prominent jurisprudent of the country.

Iran: Rowhani Meets With Justice Minister; Denounces U.S.

LD0203195796 Tehran IRNA in English
1902 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 2, IRNA — Vice-Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majles) of Iran Hasan Rowhani told visiting Russian Minister of Justice Valentin Kovalev here Saturday that Washington needed to realize that it lacks the qualifications for claiming the right for world leadership.

The Iranian official said the Islamic Republic adhered to the principle of democracy and equal say for all nations, and would not accept the rule of one nation over the rest of the world.

The Russian official observed that his government was determined to continue cooperation with Iran including in the area of peaceful application of nuclear energy.

Valentin Kovalev said the cooperation between Iran and Russia is one solely with economic implications. He commented that the two neighboring countries had historically collaborated with each other in various areas that went back even long before the new world was discovered by Columbus.

The vice speaker of the legislative assembly of Iran and the visiting Russian justice minister in their meeting also discussed topics in relation to the legal regime of the Caspian Sea.

Iran: Russian Justice Minister, Prosecutor Review Legal Issues

LD0303175896 Tehran IRNA in English
1606 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 3, IRNA — The visiting Russian minister of justice, Valentin Kovalyov, here on Sunday held talks with Iranian prosecutor General Ayatollah Morteza Moqtada'i on legal cooperation between the two countries.

Kovalyov said Iran and Russia have had political and economic relations since the 16th century and that signing of the legal agreement would serve to boost the judicial relations between the two nations.

During his four-day visit to Tehran, Kovalyov has held talks with the ranking judicial officials including his Iranian counterpart, Esma'il Shushtari on an agreement to establish legal and judicial relations and to share experience in law.

Kovalyov said continuation of such visits would develop multi-lateral cooperation especially in law. He said in the meantime that increase in the crimes and economic wrongdoings in Russia has aroused serious concern within the Russian Government.

Kovalyov said the number of murder, rapes and robbery has reduced in the recent years in Russia, but, the economic crimes have increased.

Ayatollah Moqtada'i said exchange of views on different issues would develop bilateral relations and would serve to reduce crimes in the two countries.

Ayatollah Moqtada'i said Iran is situated in the center of transit of illicit drugs, but, it has adopted necessary measures to combat drug trafficking so that it can become a model country hailed by the international community.

He said Iran enjoys successful experience in preventing crimes which can be used by Russia.

Ayatollah Moqtada'i said Islam respects all divine religions and that the Islamic Republic of Iran is administered by the Islamic laws (sharia). He said all religious minorities in Iran have freedom and enjoy the same rights in the country as the majority Muslim population. He said followers of different religions have representatives to the parliament.

Ayatollah Moqtada'i and Kovalyov reached an agreement on extradtion of criminals between the two countries.

The two officials stressed the need for observing the rights of Iranian citizens residing in Russia and Russians living in Iran in accordance with the agreements signed batween the two countries.

Kovalyov awarded Ayatollah Moqtadaei with the Anatoliy Koniyev Medal of Merit. He also invited Ayatollah Moqtada'i to visit Moscow which was accepted.

Iran: Rafsanjani Receives Russian Interior Minister Kovalev

LD0403155296 Tehran IRNA in English
1527 GMT 4 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 4, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani here Monday received the visiting Russian Justice Minister Valentin Kovalev. During the meeting, the Russian official conveyed the warm greetings of President Boris Yeltsin to President Rafsanjani and described the outcome of his visit to Iran and his talks with Iranian officials as "very good".

Referring to a document to be signed at the end of his visit for legal cooperation between the two countries, Kovalev said that Russian officials attach great importance to the agreement. He also said such legal cooperation would guarantee the expansion of diplomatic and economic relations among world countries.

President Rafsanjani in reply welcomed promotion of relations and cooperation between Iran and Russia and said the two neighboring countries enjoyed suitable potentials for further strengthening of bilateral trade and economic ties. He expressed hope that such potentials would be employed in a more suitable way in future.

Iran: Russian Justice Minister Signs Agreement, Departs

LD0503124896 Tehran IRNA in English 1141 GMT 5 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 5, IRNA — The visiting Russian justice minister, Valentin Kovalev, and his Iranian counterpart Hojjat ol-Eslam Esma'il Shushtari, signed a legal and judicial agreement here Tuesday.

In an interview with IRNA after signing the agreement, Kovalev said that due to the special importance of the accord, he had been assigned by the Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, to sign it.

The agreement has not been concluded between two ministries or governments but between two countries and nations, he said, adding that this indicates the high importance of the agreement.

Russia does not sign any agreement or contract with a country which violates human rights and signing of this contract is a proof of observation of human rights in the Islamic republic, he said.

The Russian justice minister said that the contract envisages Tehran-Moscow cooperation in the areas of criminal and civil laws and will further boost mutual ties in various fields in the future.

He said that according to the agreement the capitals and rights of citizens of both countries will be respected and protected in either country.

After signing the agreement, Kovalev awarded Hojjat ol-Eslam Shushtari with the Russian justice ministry's medal of merit on behalf of President Yeltsin.

Kovalev and his entourage who arrived here on March 1st, left Tehran for Moscow after signing the agreement.

Iran: Commentary Discusses Cooperation With Russia

LD0703140096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1105 GMT 7 Mar 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, heading a high-ranking delegation, arrived in Moscow yesterday evening. [passage omitted]

The expansion of cooperation between Iran and Russia, and the two countries' shared stances, which are becoming closer day by day, meet their mutual needs. And since this issue is fundamentally affecting the establishment of peace and stability in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and other regions, it has provoked the hostility of the West and particularly the United States, which intends to create regional conflicts in order to increase its influence. This is because regional cooperation between Iran and Russia will halt the spread of the influence and the greedy policies of the alien states in the region and will foil their efforts to disturb our stability.

It is necessary to point out that during Dr. Velayati's visit to Moscow the issue of the legal status of the Caspian Sea and the need for incorporating the interests of the littoral countries in a just and specified manner was discussed.

Dr. Velayati is still continuing his talks in Moscow. At any rate, it can be said for sure that the visit will create a new impetus in the two countries' relations.

Iran: President Receives Envoys From Niger, Sudan

LD0203114396 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A special envoy of the Niger Government today met President Hashemi-Rafsanjani and gave him a written message from the leader of his country.

Sumanase Engonia [name as heard] also reported on the latest socio-political situation in Niger and the change of power.

He said that the Islamic Republic of Iran was the best friend to Muslim countries. Referring to Iran's powerful role among Islamic countries, he called for Iranian support toward ending the difficulties faced by the Muslim people of Niger.

President Rafsanjani said Iran was prepared to help the Muslim people of Niger and then ordered the Foreign Ministry to study the possibility of cooperation and support.

In addition, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani today received Ghazi Salah al-din, secretary general of the Sudanese National Congress, who was carrying a written message from the president of his country.

The secretary general said that the recent UN Security Council decision against Sudan was because the Sudanese Government had insisted on the territorial integrity of the country and its Islamic principles.

He said that world arrogance was accusing Sudan of terrorism in order to increase the pressure on the Islamic country of Sudan.

He emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran had an important role in the international scene and good relations with most of the countries. He called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to support Sudan.

In turn, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani condemned the baseless accusations made by world arrogance against Islamic countries, including Sudan, and said that Islamic countries should cooperate with the Islamic country of Sudan so it could overcome the designs of world arrogance.

Iran: PRC Envoy Holds Talks With IRNA Chief on News Exchange

LD0403150996 Tehran IRNA in English
1436 GMT 4 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 2, IRNA — Chinese ambassador to Tehran, Wang Shijie here on Monday held talks with managing-director of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Fereydun Verdinejad on news exchange between the two countries.

Wang said performance of IRNA has served to consolidate friendship between Iran and China.

The ambassador said, "I read newspapers in Iran and have realized that IRNA is very active in broadcasting news concerning Iran and abroad."

He said IRNA and XINHUA news agency enjoy satisfactory cooperation which should be developed.

The ambassador said the developing countries including Iran and China are capable of attaining advanced technology.

Verdinejad for his part said Iran and China as the two important Asian states have had widespread cooperation in different areas, adding that the trend of cooperation should be sped up, he said.

He said cooperation between the two nations could prevent presence of aliens in the region.

Verdinejad invited the managing-director of XINHUA to visit the Islamic Republic of Iran. The invitation would be conveyed to the XINHUA chief by the Chinese ambassador.

Iran: Kazakh Official Calls For Expanded Trade, Political Ties

LD0503211896 Tehran IRNA in English
1947 GMT 5 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sari (Mazandaran), March 5, IRNA — Chief consul of Kazakhstan at the Mashhad consulate, Tairov Sibet, in his meeting here Tuesday [4 March] with the governor general of Mazandaran, 'Ali Asghar Geranmayeh-Pur, called for expansion of trade and political relations with Iran.

Sibet said Mazandaran Province has good agricultural and livestock resources and can meet Kazakhstan's need in this sector.

Geranmayeh-Pur referred to the historical ties between the people of northern Iran and Kazakhstan, and described the relations as "brotherly". He stressed on expansion of mutual cooperation in all areas and said that at present most of the 6,000 Kazakhs who migrated to Iran during Communist rule in their country, are living in the northern parts of the Islamic Republic, and enjoy good relations with the local people.

The Kazakh consul is visiting Caspian Sea province of Mazandaran from his base in the capital of the neighbouring province of Khorasan, to discuss possibilities of trade and economic cooperation.

Mazandaran Province is linked by a shipping line with Kazakhstan on the northeastern shores of the Caspian.

Iran's [as received] consulate in Khorasan has not yet been officially opened and would be inaugurated soon.

The Islamic Republic of Iran imports polyester raw materials, crystal, asbestos, iron bars of various types and chemical fertilizers from Kazakhstan and exports citrus fruits, foodstuff and dress to that republic.

Iran: Borujerdi Holds Talks With Sri Lankan Agriculture Minister

LD0503214596 Tehran IRNA in English
2130 GMT 5 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 5, IRNA — Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi and the visiting Sri Lankan Minister of Agricultural Development and Research P. Jayaratne in their meeting here today discussed Tehran-Colombo relations as well as the two countries' political stances.

In the meeting, Jayaratne expressing satisfaction over promotion of cooperation between the two sides, announced his country's readiness for further expansion of multilateral relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Praising the principled and powerful stance of the Islamic Republic of Iran the Sri Lankan minister noted that "in Sri Lanka's view Iran has presented a successful revolution to the world."

Borujerdi briefed Jayaratne on the Iranian stand towards important regional and international developments, and noted that in its foreign policy Iran has spared no efforts to restore peace and stability in the region "with remarkable results in this regard."

Expressing hope that Sri Lanka would overcome its internal problems, the deputy foreign minister announced Iranian readiness for promotion of its ties with Sri Lanka in all fields particularly in the trade and economic sector.

Iran: Paper Comments on Velayati Visit to Moscow

LD0703102996 Tehran IRNA in English
0918 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 7, IRNA — The English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' Thursday commented on the visit to Moscow of the Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati expressing the hope that the trip would lead to a better understanding for further expansion of mutual ties.

"Fortunately, both enjoy identical stands in several issue-areas, including exploitation of marine resources of the Caspian Sea, expansion of regional coopertaion, settlement of regional disputes through peaceful negotiations (including those in Karabakh, Tajikistan and Afghanistan)," said the editorial.

The paper stressed that close cooperation between the two countries can prepare the grounds for more intimate cooperation among Asian countries, especilly between Iran, Russian, China, India and Pakistan.

Referring to the Tehran-Moscow opposition to U.S. hegemonistic policies, it said the West constantly attempts to resort to such issues as the human rights and terrorism for isolating the Asian countries.

"Under the circumstance, Iran and Russia, as two influential regional countries, should deepen cooperation to prepare a congenial ground for regional peace and development."

Iran: Troops Start 'Zafar' Maneuver

LD0503112196 Tehran IRNA in English
1048 GMT 5 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khash, Sistan-Baluchestan Prov., March 5, IRNA — The grand 'Zafar' maneuver was launched Tuesday by the Sistan-Baluchestan's first brigade of the 88th armoured division in the provincial city of Khash.

During the 5-day war games, the participating units being supported by heavy artillery, air defense units and Air Force of the Islamic Republic Army, will carry out offensives as well as defensive operations including repelling chemical attacks, in an area of 200 square km.

Iran: 2,050 Rifles Seized, 912 People Rounded Up in Southwest

LD0603183896 Tehran IRNA in English
1648 GMT 6 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., March 6, IRNA — Provincial law enforcement forces confiscated 2,050 assault rifles in this southwestern province between March 21, 1995, and February 19, 1996.

Commander of provincial law enforcement forces General Hoseynabadi said that forces under his command seized 61,751 rounds of ammunition and 395 magazines.

Hoseynabadi added that the forces rounded up 912 persons on related charges and handed them over to the judiciary as well.

In related news from Abadan (Khuzestan), local law enforcement forces managed to confiscate two consignments of smuggled goods, worth rls. 2.574 billion, from six smugglers at mouth of Bahmanshir river over the past 48 hours.

Iran: Mohtashemi Cited on Liberation Movement of Iran

NC0703132796 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English
2 Mar 96 pp 1, 14

[TEHRAN TIMES Service report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TEHRAN—"The letter on LMI [Liberation Movement of Iran] is an authentic document written by the late leader of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeyni, and the Liberation Movement is seeking to misrepresent the political history of Iran," said Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Mohtashemi in an interview with the TEHRAN TIMES.

Denying the allegations of the Liberation Movement's Secretary General, Ebrahim Yazdi, claiming that the above letter has been fabricated, he added, "The letter was written by the late reader in reply to my question and there us no doubt whatsoever about its authenticity. "

While the Interior Minister in the Cabinet of the former Prime Minister Mir Hoseyn Musavi, Mohtashemi asked the late Imam Khomeyni to express his attitude towards the eligibility of the Liberation Movement (LMI) as a political entity.

The reply letter, published two years after it was written, explicitly stated that the members of LMI are not eligible for positions in executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government.

The former Interior Minister, who was in charge of issuing licenses for setting up political parties while holding of office, stressed, "It seems that the LMI is set on misrepresenting the political history of Iran."

He added that Imam Khomeyni had foreseen doubts would be raised about the authenticity of the letter.

"As soon as the letter was written, the late Imam's son, Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni, called me saying Imam Khomeyni had ordered that copies of the letter be sent to Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, the then President, Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the then Majles speaker, Mir Hoseyn Musavi, the then prime minister, Ayatollah Musavi-Ardebili, the then judiciary chief, and Hojjat ol-Eslam Reyshahri, the then information minister," Mohtashemi noted.

A member of Majma'e Ruhaniyun-e Mobarez, who was in close contact with the late leader before the victory of the Islamic Revolution, for 12 years, Mohtashemi pointed out that he can recognize the late Imam's handwriting easily, and that he has no doubt about the genuineness of the letter.

The letter, which raised much controversy in the years of 1988 and 1989 between Mehdi Bazargan, the then LMI's secretary general, and the late Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni, and was also brought up in the court, was regarded by the Iranian circles as a token of the late Imam's disapproval of the LMP's attitudes, which was evident even before Imam Khomeyni appointed Mehdi provisional prime minister in 1979, and not as the late Imam's mistrust in Bazargan. Imam Khomeyni always viewed Mehdi Bazargan as a religious figure, hut the one who was naive and not self-reliant in the face of the U.S.

On the question as to why this letter had remained dormant for two years, he said, until 1989 taking into account that the LMI was in isolation from political scene, it was not necessary to publish it. However, certain officials as well as members of the LMI were aware of it. In 1989 due to new conditions prevailing over the country, I personally felt that keeping people in dark about the letter would prepare a ground for a compromise between some of the officials and the West-oriented liberals. So for the first time I gave it to the monthly PASDAR-E ESLAM to be published.

The former interior minister termed as baseless the claim of the LMI that in his interview—held one year after the letter of the late Imam Khomeyni was issued—he had allowed the movement to have its political activities. In the said interview I called on all political groups to procure license for their political activities. Without mentioning name of any organization, I announced that no meeting and rallies will be allowed to be held and no paper published without the permission of interior ministry.

Asked why the court has not declared its final view on the complaints filed in this regard, despite the verdict of experts that the letter was genuine, the former Interior Minister replied, "The judiciary should answer such a question."

However, he said that he has recently been informed that the lawsuit has been closed by the judiciary on the grounds that the plaintiff and defendant have both deceased.

Mohtashemi reiterated that such matters which are related to the fate of the Revolution and the country's history should be pursued by the public prosecutor even if there is no plaintiff anymore.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Spokesman on Border Fence Dispute With India, Kashmir

BK0703160996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Pakistan will take appropriate steps to safeguard its security, if India goes for another nuclear test. Answering questions by newsmen in Islamabad this afternoon, a Foreign Office spokesman reiterated Pakistan's principled policy on the nuclear issue. He said despite having nuclear capability, Pakistan has taken a decision at the highest level not to use this capability for nonpeaceful purposes. [passage omitted]

When asked about the working boundary in Jammu region and the frequent shootings by Indian troops, the spokesman said the area on the other side of the boundary is a disputed territory, and India does not have any right to change its status. He said under cover of shootings, India is taking an illegal step to fence the working boundary, but Pakistan will not accept any sort of fencing.

The spokesman condemned the murderous attack of Indian agents on the Kashmiri leader, Shabbir Shah, yesterday and urged the international community to take notice of these attacks and dissuade India from carrying out such acts against All Party Hurriyat Conference leaders in occupied Kashmir. Referring to the murderous attacks of Indian security forces on various Kashmiri leaders and the incidents of setting fire to their houses and those of their relatives in this connection, he said such actions by India reflect the fact that it has failed in crushing the struggle of the Kashmiri people for their right of self-determination and in preventing them from opposing the election ploy.

Pakistan: Spokesman Notes Indian Attacks on Kashmiri Leaders

BK0703155096 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has called upon the international community to take notice of the attacks on the Kashmiri leaders by the Indian authorities and dissuade New Delhi from employing such tactics. Foreign Office, while giving weekly briefing to newsmen in Islamabad today, referred to the attacks on leaders—including Abdul Ghani Lone, Yasin Malik, Syed Ali Gilani, besides attacks of the Indian intelligence agencies on Shabbir Shah. The spokesman said Indian authorities, frustrated by outstanding success of All Parties Hurriyat Conference in advocating inalienable right of self-determination, the Indian security forces have increasingly resorted to intimidating tactics, including attacks on persons and properties.

The spokesman also said Pakistan has also taken a strong exception to the threats hurled by fundamentalist Bal Thackrey to Pakistan cricket team visiting India to play World Cup match.

Pakistan: TV Reports Top Kashmiri Leader's Telephone Interview

BK0703161396 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In occupied Kashmir, 13 people have been martyred in clashes and indiscriminate firing by Indian occupation forces. Four of them were shot dead in Gandarbal area, triggering protest demonstrations by the local people. Strike was also observed against the killing of innocent people and arsoning of buildings by Indian troops all across the held valley. Three Kashmiri youth were killed in custody in Srinagar.

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference [APHC] has condemned the murderous attacks by Indian agencies and called upon the world community to take note of these attacks, which are directed toward crushing the ongoing freedom movement in the occupied valley. The conference held an emergency meeting in Srinagar today to discuss ways to counter this latest move of New Delhi. The APHC chairman, Mirwaiz Maulvi Mohammad Umar Farooq, talked to PTV representative Habibullah Farooqi on telephone from Srinagar, while the APHC leadership was still in meeting:

[Begin recording] [Umar Farooq] Well, the Executive Council of APHC is in session today, and we are discussing various issues which are on the agenda of the APHC—the most important being the fact that the Government of India started its campaign against the innocent people of Kashmir. Most importantly, you must be hearing that the new tactics adopted by the government and its agencies are: to blast the houses of mujahideen and those people who are working for the movement, and also the ongoing state terrorism which the Government of India is actively involved in. You must be hearing about the fact that women are being raped, youth are being tortured, killed under custody, and also the fact that the APHC leadership has come under attack from the government agencies.

Mr. Lone, Mr. Gilani, Mr. Shabbir Shah, Mr. Yasin Malik, they have been attacked recently by the .... [pauses] Attempts have been made upon their life by the Indian agencies. So, we are in session today. We are discussing these issues, and APHC is quite firm on its opinion that our struggle will continue until we achieve our basic right.

[Habibullah Farooqi] Mirwaiz Saheb, India seems to be determined to go ahead with its plan of holding elections in the occupied Jammu and Kashmir. What is the reaction of the APHC leadership on that?

[Umar Farooq] Elections are no solution to the Kashmir problem, because we don't see elections as a substitute for self- determination. Our struggle is aimed at giving the people their right to self-determination. An election under the Indian Constitution is in no way acceptable to the people of Kashmir. The Indian Government has at various times said that they are willing to have election in Kashmir, but the APHC leadership is determined. We have rejected the idea of elections, and we have asked the people that they will boycott the elections at every moment when the Indians announce the elections. [end recording]

Mirwaiz Maulvi Mohammad Umar Farooq also condemned the attempt on the life of PTV special correspondent in Srinagar, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Khayal, and said that APHC leadership firmly stands behind the Jammu and Kashmir journalist community, who are doing great service to the Kashmir cause. The house of Mr. Ghulam Nabi Khayal was attacked with hand grenades by Indian agents last night; however, Mr. Khayal survived unhurt in the attack.

Pakistan: Leghari Stresses Desire for Peace, Views Threat From India

BK0703151596 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 7 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has said Pakistan wants peace but has to remain fully prepared and alive to the real threat perception from India in view of its nuclear activity and missile program. He was talking to a delegation of National Defense College who called on him at the Awain-i-Sadar [President House] today. The president pointed out that India's Prithvi missile was Pakistan specific and a serious tension multiplier in the region. He said that Pakistan does not want an arms race in the region and had proposed zero missile regime. He reiterated that Pakistan was willing to sign the Nonproliferation Treaty, if India also does so. The president said that Kashmir is a real flash point, and Pakistan wants its peaceful solution in accordance with the United Nations resolutions.

In reply to a question about the Eighth Amendment, the president observed that the Constitution of 1973 was unilaterally amended during the previous martial law regime, giving some extra powers to the president which distorted the parliamentary character of our government. He said that, personally, he was not in its favor, but due to present political polarization in the country, the Eighth Amendment was not being amended by the parliament.

Pakistan: Afghan Leaders Meeting in Islamabad Viewed

BK0703155396 Karachi TAKBEER in Urdu 29 Feb 96 pp 16-18

["Exclusive Interview" with Retired General Hamid Gul, an expert on Afghan affairs, by Irfan Siddiqi; place and date not given — first four paragraphs are TAKBEER introduction]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Political and diplomatic circles in the capital are still busy guessing on whose specific invitation 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, the chief of the Jonbesh-e Meli-ye Eslami-ye Afghanistan; and Hezb-e Eslami Chief Engineer Golboddin Hekmatyar had come to Islamabad in the second week of February when the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the foreign secretary were abroad. Who orchestrated the gathering of their political allies in Pakistan? What was the agenda of their discussion and who represented Pakistan at the talks? What was the real objective of the Islamabad meeting of the opponents of Afghan President Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani and what strategy did the Pakistani foreign affairs expert use to bring together the anti-Rabbani forces in Islamabad? The government still projects it as a nonofficial and informal gathering and describes Islamabad's hospitality as part of Pakistan's "glorious traditions," but the manner in which the official media played up reports about this gathering and the generosity with which 'Abdol Rashid Dostam was accorded the status of a head of state conceal a world of meanings in themselves. Hekmatyar was accorded a secondary status under a premeditated plan. Informed sources say specific arrangements were made for a meeting between Dostam and Pakistani Chief of Army Staff General Jahangir Karamat. There were also murmurs about a possible meeting between Golboddin Hekmatyar and Jahangir Karamat, for which both have expressed their willingness, but someone, God knows, prevented this from happening. The journalists clearly felt that a conscious effort was being made to lessen the stature of Golboddin Hekmatyar and to project 'Abdol Rashid Dostam as a forward-looking and ambitious leader. Even Hekmatyar himself felt it and shared his feelings with his closest circles.

It is being said in the capital that the Pakistani strategists used the gathering of Afghan leaders as a double-edged sword. On one side, they very skillfully tried to sow the seeds of misunderstanding between 'Abdol Rashid Dostam and Golboddin Hekmatyar — the difference of opinion between the two had become clearly visible — and on the other, the Pakistani rulers tried to bring on one platform the opponents of Prof. Borhanoddin Rabbani — the "persona non grata" in Kabul. The Pakistani strategists also tried to help Afghan leaders forge a grand alliance and set up a combined military force which could remain united, both in resisting any assault from the Rabbani forces and in launching any offensive against them. The end results of this guile by Pakistan may alter the political scene in the entire region.

The Taleban did not participate in these negotiations but, it is felt, they were represented by an invisible force. The entire drama was staged to bring Dostam and Hekmatyar into the ranks of the Taleban in view of the looming dangers of [war] in spring. It is first time since the formation of an interim government of the mojahedin in 1989, and the latest talks in Islamabad that a situation has arisen, in which a plan has been laid to make some Afghan leaders stand against one important and notable group from among the very forces that jointly waged a holy war [against the Soviet invaders]. One does not need much political insight to guess why this is happening and at whose instance.

Watchers of the Afghan affairs believe that Herat is going to be the arena of a fierce conflict between Esmayeel Khan [names as transliterated] and the Taleban in a couple of months, in which the Rabbani forces will surely back former. Foreseeing this, the shortsighted Government of Pakistan is bent on turning the anti- Rabbani elements into a fighting force for the Taleban, which will definitely create more irritants in Pakistan-Iran relations. I held an exclusive interview with retired Gen. Hamid Gul, a close watcher of Afghan affairs; and M. Akram Zaki, the former secretary general of the foreign affairs. My interview with Gen. Hamid Gul is given below.

[Irfan Siddiqi] How do you view the recent gathering of Afghan leaders in Islamabad?

[Hamid Gul] The official media has presented it as a gathering of "anti-Rabbani forces" which is not good in any respect. This is a blatant interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. We have no right at all to help create a united front of some groups of Afghan mojahedin against another group. Rabbani's Jam'iyat-e Eslami and Golboddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami are the two main pillars of the Islamic movement in Afghanistan. Those sowing the seeds of discord between them are neither the friends of Islam nor of Afghanistan or Pakistan. This is an international conspiracy designed basically to get Iran mired in Afghanistan and then create a situation which may lead to an escalation of tension between Iran and Pakistan. Former Governor of Herat Esmayeel Khan is sitting on Iranian soil and preparing for an attack from there to liberate Herat from the clutches of the Taleban. Foreseeing this attack, Islamabad, acting at the behest of someone else, is playing the game of bringing the anti-Rabbani groups into the ranks of the Taleban. Badghis is also under Taleban's occupation, while Faryab, northwest of Badghis, is under Dostam's control. Dostam has a big ground force as well as air power under his disposal. The plan to pit Esmayeel Khan against the Taleban and to create a combined force of all anti-Rabbani elements against Kabul is not in Pakistan's interest. General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam has categorically stated in Islamabad that an attack on any group, including the Taleban, will be considered as an assault on all opposition elements and we will unitedly counter that onslaught. Why and on whose urging has such a powerful statement been given in support of the Taleban, which actually did not participate in the Islamabad parleys? Who is working as a link between the Taleban and Dostam? Apparently, it is our own Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I also view these talks in the context of the U.S. desire to tighten the noose around Iran. One of the objectives of these parleys was to create misunderstandings between 'Abdol Rashid Dostam and Golboddin Hekmatyar. The protocol that was accorded to Dostam by the official media and the manner in which effort was made to lessen the position and stature of Golboddin Hekmatyar are not difficult to understand. Hekmatyar dealt a severe blow to the designs of the stage managers of this drama when he declared at his news conference that "negotiations can be held even if Rabbani does not resign."

I am also surprised as to who represented Pakistan in negotiations on such a sensitive issue in the absence of the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the foreign secretary from the country. Has the Afghan issue, like the Karachi tangle, been left to the mercy of [Interior Minister] Nasirullah Babar? Our rulers ought to keep in mind our national interests. They ought to keep in view the real background of the holy war in Pakistan [as published] and play their role in promoting good relations among the various forces which jointly waged the holy war. It is unwise to side with one group and take action against another. Does not the world see how far the present Pakistani Governmet has gone in carrying out hostile activities against Rabbani, while supporting the Taleban? Utility stores are being set up in areas under Taleban's control. Telephone and other facilities are being established and Kabul is being considered as an enemy's fort. We have our consulates in Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-e Sharif, Jalalabad, and other places but we have cut off our contacts with Kabul. What is the motive behind bringing all the anti-Rabbani elements onto one platform? I want to put this fact on record that if Esmayeel Khan attacks Herat, a "proxy war" will break out between Iran and Pakistan. [passage omitted]

Pakistan: Spokesman Dismisses Kabul Objections to Road Work

BK0803024096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0100 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad yesterday that the construction and repair of roads in various parts of Afghanistan is consistent with the understanding reached among Pakistan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan in Ashgabat in August 1993. Commenting on the objections raised by the

Kabul administration over repairing of the Ashgabat-Qandahar-Chaman- Quetta-Karachi road, he said it is all the more amazing that the Kabul administration is now objecting to the Ashgabat agreement, as it involves providing trade and transportation facilities to the people. He said that the construction and repair of roads will prove helpful in developing the infrastructure in Afghanistan and this is fully consistent with the understanding among the three countries.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: President Rules Out Early Elections

BK0703025496 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 7 Mar 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga yesterday ruled out a mid-term election saying the government will run the full term.

She told the government parliamentary group: "There is no intention to hold an election till the end of the full term of office since the government was voted to power with a 62 percent mandate by the people".

A release issued by Chief Government Whip, Education Minister Richard Pathirana said the President made this comment in answer to a query regarding a news item appearing in some newspapers.

Since the government was elected for a period of 6 years elections should be held only after the completion of this term the President has said.

The government parliamentary group meeting was held on Tuesday [5 March] at the presidential secretariat. President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga presided.

Discussions centred round matters concerning parliamentary business, the political situation in the country, development programs undertaken by the government and the restructuring of public enterprises.

The release states that the President explained in detail the political situation in the country.

Sri Lanka: Over 50 Dissidents Imprisoned by LTTE Reportedly Escape

BK0703030396 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 7 Mar 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] More than fifty followers of former LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] Deputy Leader Mahendrarajah alias Mahattaya held by the LTTE at Chavakachcheri have broken jail and escaped into Thenmarachchi area, a senior Police officer in the North told the Daily News'.

These men had been rounded up and detained by the LTTE in Jaffna two to three months before the execution of Mahattaya, he said.

Reports from the North said they were held by the LTTE on the orders of Prabhakaran on charges of revolt and betrayal of the LTTE.

Following their escape on Sunday March 3 morning, 15 LTTE cadres who had been guarding them too have been apprehended by the LTTE.

The police official said the escapees are reported to be haunting the Thenmarachchi area fully armed and they might openly clash with LTTE cadres in the area any moment.

The escapees are receiving the support of ordinary Tamil public in Thenmarachchi and they have already launched an anti-Prabhakaran movement in the area.

The escapees are reported to have undergone various forms of torture at the hands of the LTTE while they were held in custody at Chavakachcheri.

Sri Lanka: Navy Destroys LTTE 'Flotilla'

BK0803013396 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 8 Mar 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Navy fired at a flotilla of six LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] boats detected near the Puvarasanthivu island north of Kalmunai Point, Jaffna on Wednesday night destroying five of them and capturing the other.

The navy also seized six diving masks, two diving suits and other diving equipment including two knives from the captured boat. Its occupants who had been wounded in the navy attack are believed to have fallen overboard into the sea before it was captured.

Naval sources said about 15 Tigers manned the six boats. Their fate is unknown but many are believed to have been wounded and drowned in the attack.

A group of tigers had fired at the Navy boats from the direction of the Puvarasanthivu islet during the confrontation but the navy suffered no casualties. Minute and negligible damage was caused to one of the navy vessels which had received a single shot.

Naval sources said investigations revealed that there was a secret Tiger plan to transport 'terrorists' cadres in small numbers from Puvarasanthivu islet to the Valikamam area in Jaffna by boat.

Sri Lanka: 'Biggest Ever' Arms Haul Made in Colombo

BK0803115096 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 8 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sri Lankan security forces made their biggest ever arms haul in the heart of the capital, Colombo, after raiding the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] hideout today.

Defense officials said that troops in a predawn raid of a house belonging to a Tamil businessman in Petta found three automatic assault rifles, six rocket propelled grenades, 18 hand grenades, small arms and ammunition, and forged papers, officials said. [sentence as heard]

Military spokesman Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe told the SLBC [Sri Lanka Broadcasting Service] that the credit must go to the military intelligence services. He said it was a formidable arsenal that was found hidden inside the ceiling of the house. Brigadier Munasinghe said that they also found 300 identity cards, eight passports, and 200 official seals of several police officers in charge of city police stations in what seemed to be a forgery operation to help rebel infiltrators. Among the weapons found were three assault rifles, six rebel-made Arul rifle grenades [as heard], 18 hand grenades, and 500 rounds of ammunition. Twelve cyanide capsules were also found, the brigadier added.

Security sources say that troops are making progress in their antiterrorist operation in the East. One hundred and thirty-five LTTE cadres have been killed by the security forces in the last three weeks. Large quantities [illegible] arms and ammunition have also been recovered. Many terrorist attacks on security forces camps have been repulsed. A senior military official says that these setbacks have severely affected the LTTE. Karikalan, a high-ranking Tiger leader, is now being moved out of the East as a result. The security forces have been able to adapt successfully to the guerrilla tactics which the LTTE employs in the East. Operation Rivikirana [Sun Rays] which claimed the lives of 15 LTTE cadres [is a] clear example of the success of these tactics. Troops of Rivikirana also caused serious injuries to Tiger leaders Ramesh, Balendra, and Yogan.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Reports Killing of Civilians by Colombo Troops

BK0703135896 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 4 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Seven civilians were killed and 21 others seriously injured in dastardly missile attacks launched by Sri Lankan troops from Colombothurai locality in Jaffna. This act of state terrorism was launched at around 1230 yesterday. It occurred in the form of missile attacks from Colombothurai locality on the junction, Ayyanar temple, and the bridge in Navatkuli; Appan Kudiyiruppu; and Seelannagar localities. About 10 missiles landed and blew up in these localities, killing four people on the spot. The body of one person was mutilated beyond recognition. Two more succumbed to their grievous injuries on the way to the hospital. Several homes of civilians were damaged. There were sporadic missile attacks on Navatkuli locality until yesterday evening. Fearing incessant missile attacks, Weligama emigrants and Navatkuli residents are fleeing. Among those killed, the bodies of 20-year old Susaimary Margaret, 23-year old Ponnambalam Dushyantan, 18-year old Kandasamy Pakeerathan, and 20-year old Parthipan, and 24-year old Suresh have been identified.

Three Sinhalese fishermen, who were detained by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] after being intercepted on high seas off the coast of Nayaru in Point Pedro, were released yesterday. The LTTE handed them over to the International Committee of the Red Cross. Talking to newsmen at Point Pedro harbor, Silva, who is from Matara and one of those released, said Chief Prabhakaran did not treat us like captives, but rather like brothers. He said: after going to the south, we will publicize about the goodwill of the LTTE, who gave us food and clothing and treated us well. The Sinhalese fishermen departed on the ship 'Kabarana' from Point Pedro port.

"The Sri Lankan Government has indirectly exposed its policy of genocide against Tamils by discouraging the United Nations from providing aid to Tamil refugees, who are arriving in Wanni to escape bomb attacks by government troops on Tamil cities", so says an international journal, 'Combat and Militaria' [preceding three words in English]. Saying that the Sri Lankan Government lacked the brains to wage a war, the journal has also pointed out that it has called upon Tamils in Colombo to provide funds for the ongoing war against Tamils and that those who refuse to are accused of being LTTE sympathizers and arrested. The same journal has also noted that the Sri Lankan Government is making the same mistakes as Americans did in Vietnam.

Two freedom fighters embraced martyrdom in a confrontation with Sri Lankan troops at Tandiadi on 25 February. They are: Second Lieutenant Dixon alias Dakshinamoorthy Sudhakaran from Batticaloa, and Second Lieutenant Ezhilan alias Thambirasa Ganesakumar. Freedom fighter Second Lieutenant Mukundakumar alias Kannan Sivakumar from Batticaloa was martyred in a confrontation with Sri Lankan troops at Chemmanthurai locality in Batticaloa on 27 February. Our tributes go to the national heroes who dedicated themselves entirely in the war to liberate our motherland from the aggressors.

The thirst of the Tigers is the motherland of Tamil Eelam.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Dispatch Reports Air Force Raids, LTTE Offensive

BK0803130596 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 6 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Two Israeli-made fighter aircraft recently acquired by the Government of Sri Lanka hovered above the Parantan and Kilinochchi areas and dropped two bombs. People in markets, refugee camps, and bus stations ran helter-skelter for cover. Schools in Parantan, Murakamoddai, and Kilinochchi were immediately closed and the pupils sent home. At around 0845 yesterday morning, people in the areas of Kilinochchi, Murakamoddai, and Parantan appeared to be terrorized and frightened by the hovering of these Air Force saboteurs [nasakarikal]. People did not suffer any loss or damage, as the two bombs dropped by the aircraft landed and exploded in the plains.

A large number of people are emigrating to safer places due to the continuing missile attacks launched from the Palali and Elephant Pass military camps. It may be recalled that Sri Lankan troops are resorting to incessant missile attacks against the areas of Vadamarachchi and that the people are suffering from the loss of life and property caused by these acts of state terrorism. Frightened by these acts of terrorism, a large number of people from Vadamarachchi are emigrating toward Wanni. [passage omitted]

Four hundred people from among those who halted in Vavuniya during their onward journey to Colombo have returned to their homes because they were denied permission to continue. Sri Lankan troops, who have detained a large number of people in various camps at Tandikkulam, have only permitted a small number of people to continue their onward journey after interrogation and have sent back the rest. Travelers proceeding to Colombo on urgent business are being detained in Vavuniya for several days.

Reports say that the military operation continues in the east. There have also been reports about massive Air Force bombing raids and the continuation of the worst type of missile attacks. A number of civilian houses have been completely damaged and properties destroyed as a result. Meanwhile, a report from Colombo says that the military suffered heavy losses in an attack by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] yesterday evening in the areas where the military was advancing and that the LTTE captured a number of weapons. The above report also states that a few military vehicles were destroyed during the LTTE attack.

The thirst of the Tigers is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam.

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 352
MERRIFIELD, VA.

This is a U.S. Government publication produced by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). Its contents in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the U.S. Government.

FBIS collects, translates, disseminates, and analyzes foreign open-source information on behalf of the U.S. Government. Its publications may contain copyrighted material. ***Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.***

— Bracketed indicators before the first sentence of each item describe the way in which the material was processed by FBIS.

— Headlines and all bracketed explanatory notes are supplied by FBIS.

— Personal and place names are rendered in accordance with the decisions of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names as adapted by FBIS. Unverified names in radio and television material appear in parentheses and are spelled phonetically; words and phrases in parentheses preceded by a question mark are unclear in the original and deduced from context.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

U.S. Government Customers

For a list of FBIS products, to subscribe to an FBIS publication, or to indicate a change of address contact:

FBIS
P.O. Box 2604
Washington, DC 20013-2604
Telephone: (202) 338-6735
FAX: (703) 733-6042

Non-Government Customers

Subscriptions are available from the National Technical Information Service:

NTIS
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, VA 22161
Telephone: (703) 487-4630
FAX: (703) 321-8547

New subscribers should expect a 30-day delay in receipt of the first issue.